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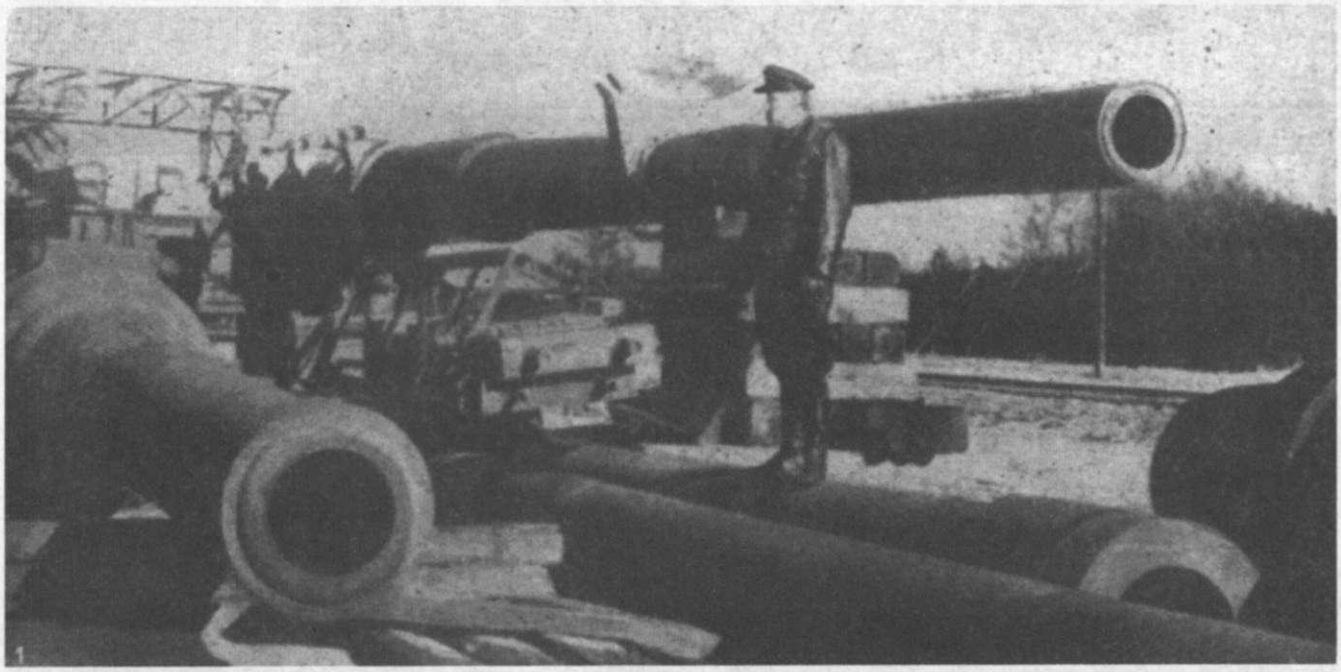
SIXPENCE Edited by Sir John Hammerton APRIL 27, 1945

SEEING THE 'BIG HEAVE' FOR HIMSELF, MR. CHURCHILL drove in an armoured car through ruined Xanten to cross the Rhine and watch troops of the British 2nd Army in action in areas still under enemy fire. In the uniform of a Colonel of the Royal Sussex Regiment he visited the 3rd Division, which is composed largely of English county regiments, with battalions from Scotland and Northern Ireland. During his trip (disclosed on March 26, 1945) a shell exploded only 50 yards from him. *Photo, British Official*

Desperate Last Stands Routed by Russians



AT DANZIG, where Nazi forces made a desperate stand, big guns (1) in the dockyards are being examined by a Soviet officer, after the great Baltic port had been stormed by Marshal Rokossovsky (2nd White Russian Front) on March 30, 1945. German women cleared away street barricades in the Silesian town of Naumburg (2), entered by Marshal Koniev's troops of the 1st Ukrainian Front.

At Kuestrin, on the Oder 40 miles from Berlin, men of Marshal Zhukov's 1st White Russian Front patrolled the streets of the town (3), which they took on March 12. On his way through a Czech village, a mounted Red Army reconnaissance rider of Marshal Malinovsky's 2nd Ukrainian Front was welcomed by gaily dressed inhabitants (4). Marshal Tolbukhin, commanding the 3rd Ukrainian Front, captured the centre of Vienna on April 9, after bitter fighting, and penetrated the important Semmering Pass, only 150 miles from Hitler's Berchtesgaden eyrie.

Photos, Planet News, Pictorial Press

HOW THE TIDE OF BATTLE SWEPT INTO GERMANY

by Captain NORMAN MACMILLAN, M.C., A.F.C.

I VISITED a R.A.F. Casualty Air Evacuation Unit in Belgium that was formed in November 1944. Commanding it is Wing Commander J. Clarke Taylor, graduate of Glasgow University, a R.A.F. regular M.O. The unit has three Flights, with the H.Q. and B Flights at one Belgian aerodrome and A Flight at another. This unit evacuates patients from eight base hospitals. Squadron Leader J. G. M. McMurchy of Manitoba is O.C. B Flight. Each Flight has one Senior Nursing Sister with the equivalent rank of Flight Lieutenant and three Nursing Sisters with the equivalent rank of Flying Officer. There are three doctors per Flight, and each Flight has an operating theatre.

DE-LOUSING WOUNDED PRISONERS is a necessary precaution as the Allies advance into Germany. This military hospital at Linz, on the Rhine, is exclusively operated by German military medical experts who work under U.S. direction. *Photo, U.S. Official*

From an Advanced Landing Ground type of evacuation centre in Holland severe cases are evacuated direct by air to the U.K. Light cases fly back to Belgium, go into Base Hospital for treatment, and are kept in base hospital if they can recover within 31 days. At the base hospital the Medical Air Liaison Officer makes arrangements for the more serious cases to be evacuated thence by air to the U.K. The Unit made a record in transporting one casualty from the front line to U.K. hospital in 12 hours. But a paratrooper holds the absolute record. He was shot while in the aircraft, went back to the end of the line and in due course flew home in the same plane.

THE forward shuttle between Holland and Belgium began in mid-September 1944, and is carried out by Handley Page Harrows converted to Sparrows. This flying unit, known officially as the Sparrow Flight, has six aircraft, one of which had been damaged by flak, and the first pilot and one of the wounded passengers hit. In command is Squadron Leader I. C. Murison, of Edinburgh. The main evacuation is carried out by Dakota air transports. The aircraft carry 13 lying and seven sitting cases, and on their return journey fly in blood stores, stretchers, and other articles. They do not bear the Red Cross, because they may be used for the carriage of men or stores not within the Convention. There are no Red Cross aircraft, as such, in Europe, although the R.A.A.F. has Red Cross aircraft in the Far East.

This C.A.E.U. can reach a peak of 500 cases per Flight per day—a total capacity for dealing with 1,500 cases daily. In the main airfield casualty clearing ward men lay in rows on stretchers waiting for the ambulances to take them to the Dakotas. Their stretchers stood high off the floor on the special steel stands (these were made in Belgium) that are now used in the field for stretchers. I spoke to one of the men. He smiled. It was a sad smile. Yes, he was glad to be going home, but he had not expected to be going home like this. "How did you expect to go home?" I asked. "On my own pins," he said. Poor fellow! He was an amputation case. But, in an earlier war, he might never have gone home at all.

The ambulances ran up close alongside the aircraft. Orderlies lowered the upper stretchers to the floor of the ambulances with smooth operating winding-gear, lifted the stretchers out carefully and carried them the few yards to the open door in the side of the Dakota. They were lifted in manually and placed in position in tiers of three on either side of the tunnel-like interior of the aluminium alloy fuselage. Sitting cases were helped up the companion that the aircraft carries for ordinary passengers. Each Dakota had a W.A.A.F. Air Ambulance Orderly, quietly going about her work of seeing that all her patients were comfortably settled. During the flight she can provide food or drink, administer morphia or oxygen as required. They seemed to like their work, and take pride in it. One I spoke to had completed 43 trips and flown 200 hours, duly entered in her logbook.

All kinds of patients come to the air ambulances from the C.A.E.U. One of the ladies of the Sadler's Wells Ballet company contracted antrum trouble, and as a member of E.N.S.A. was treated in the base hospital and then sent home by air. The big hatch in the fuselage is closed. The engines start. The air ambulance taxies to the end of the runway, rises and climbs away above our heads. An hour later the casualties will be passing over England, soon to be landed on their destination airfield.

WHERE the Allies First Broke Into the Reich

WE entered Holland by crossing the swollen river over a wood and pontoon bridge, for the original bridge lay wrecked in the Maas. The Germans had evacuated Belgium too rapidly for much damage to be done to the towns and villages by fighting, and the first badly damaged place I saw was Sittard, Dutch Limburg town of 15,000 inhabitants.

We were then on our way to the active front, and visiting the sector where the first bitter fighting took place on German soil, the area between the Maas and Roer rivers, from Aachen in the south to Roermond in the north. Here stands Sittard in the coal-mining district of Holland. The slag heaps made familiar pyramids. Underground the mine galleries continue across the frontier into Germany, and at that time the farther shafts and galleries were in German hands, so that it was impossible to work the Dutch seams; this undoubtedly aggravated the coal situation on the Continent, and must have had an adverse reaction on the coal situation in Britain.

IT was past midday and we stopped at a hotel in Sittard, but there was nothing to eat or drink—no tea, no coffee, no beer. Fortunately we carried sandwiches in the car. Continuing along a narrow road we crossed the frontier into Germany. In Hongen, a small agricultural village, there was not a house undamaged; roofs and floors were fallen in, and thatch lay about the ground; the air was filled with the horrid odour of

ON THE SOUTHERN FLANK OF THE REICHSWALD FOREST, Captain Norman Macmillan (centre), Special Correspondent for "The War Illustrated" with the British Forces, watches a fine black Labrador search for mines with Sapper Robert Coote. In the background a transport column, including a Bailey bridge in sections, waited to move up. Nearly 3,000 dogs of various breeds, loaned by the people of Britain, have passed through the War Dogs' Training School in Britain. Men who are to handle them in action are trained alongside the mine-searching dogs, and battlefield conditions are realistically reproduced. **See also page 180.**

burnt-out homes. Heinsberg, two miles from the Roer river, was worse. It was smashed up, not just knocked down. (Heinsberg, Düren and Jülich were bombed by Bomber Command in daylight on November 16, 1944, the first support of its kind given to U.S. forces.) Heinsberg had the appearance of having been burgled, an effect created by the evacuation of the place by its former inhabitants, who had fled deeper into Germany, taking what possessions they most valued with them, and leaving the remainder scattered about by the fury of their search to find what they thought most worth taking.

A cash register stood awry in one shop, still marking the last sale made. Outside one house the pavement was strewn with cheap professional photographs of German soldiers, lying, presumably, where they had fallen when someone fled. Among a road block of military vehicles held up by mud more than axle deep amid treacherous bomb-and-shell-holes, I saw a solitary German woman civilian walking through the village; it was the short daytime period free from curfew.

WHEN such villages are captured, German civilians, who remain behind, usually in hiding, are sorted out. They are examined, and disinfested with DDT (dichloro-diphenyl-trichlorethane), the disinfestor that saved Naples from disastrous typhus. This white powder, shot inside their garments by a spray gun, kills all lice. Many German civilians from this frontier area were sent back to Holland to live in camps which the Germans had formerly prepared for Dutch internees, but when it was safe to allow it some of them were given permission to return to their homes.

It struck me how few birds were to be seen. In the course of a whole day I saw only three magpies and four crows. I saw no song bird anywhere in Holland, and few in Belgium. Whether they had migrated in search of food, or had themselves been killed for food, I cannot say, but only in the desert have I before travelled so far and seen so few birds. The only wild animals I saw over a wide area were two hares.

Just ahead, above the Roer river, little Auster planes were spotting amid clustering flak bursts; higher up a big formation of Thunderbolt fighters came west returning from a mission. United States troops were taking over from British in that sector. In the wide space of a harrowed field an American A.A. battery was setting up its 90-mm. guns. Many of the men came from the north-eastern States and preferred the dry cold of the period of snow and frost to the damp weather that had followed. A tiny white puppy gambolled about one gun platform; they called him Snowflake.

Taking a short cut, we stuck more than axle deep in the mud of a road that had been but a farm road before war swept over it, and had a hard job to reach Sittard again, recognizing our direction from the fighter that had belly-landed in a field where unrecovered mines lay still buried; this is one of the hazards of the modern forced-landing in time of war.

WE passed over the magnificent Juliana Canal to reach Susteren, Dutch town less than two miles from the German frontier and three from Maeseyck in Belgium, at the narrowest part of the Maastricht appendix. Here several houses were newly damaged, and their Dutch owners were removing their belongings and taking them back on horse-drawn vehicles. From Maeseyck we wanted to go to Weert, but the direct road was too badly damaged by frost, flood and traffic, and in the growing dusk our Humber car roared away up the fine road towards Roermond, a Dutch town then in German hands, on the farther side of the confluence of the Roer and Maas. A short distance from the river we turned left for Weert, where the canal was dry and barges and boats were stranded on the canal bed.

ON THEIR WAY TO MÜNSTER, troops of the U.S. 17th Airborne Division clustered on Churchill tanks of the 6th Guards' Armoured Brigade, manned by British crews. The town fell to both divisions, on April 2, 1945, depriving the enemy of the vital group of fighter airfields in the Rheine-Münster-Osnabruck triangle, previously battered by the 2nd T.A.F. *Photo, British Newspaper Pool*

FIELD-MARSHAL MONTGOMERY ADDRESSED HIS MEN OF THE 6th AIRBORNE DIVISION when he visited troops of the 21st Army Group during their swift advance from Coesfeld to Osnabruck, which they entered on April 3, 1945. The capture of Osnabruck opened the way into the Hanover plain; two days later Monty's men reached the river Weser and seized Minden, site of the historic Westphalian battlefield in 1759 when British and Hanoverian troops defeated the French. *Photo, British Official*

THE BATTLE FRONTS

by Maj.-Gen. Sir Charles Gwynn, K.C.B., D.S.O.

With the Allied armies across the Rhine deep into the heart of Germany, and with prisoners daily coming in by the thousand, it would seem that any day now the enemy must accept the inevitable. I am quite sure that the mass of the German Army and the great majority of its officers realize that it is useless to prolong the struggle, yet until they are prepared, and are in a position, to turn their weapons if necessary against the fanatical minority it would be over-optimistic and dangerous to believe the end is in sight.

Sporadic resistance unless suppressed by the Germans themselves is almost certain to continue, and there is always the possibility that a substantial force composed of diehard troops may be withdrawn into the more inaccessible and defensible parts of the country. It has, however, become evident that the Volkssturm is not likely to make an important contribution towards continued resistance, and I suspect that one of the main aims of Allied strategy is to prevent the retreat of any organized force into mountain strongholds.

Why, for instance have Zhukov's and Koniev's main armies not yet resumed their main offensive? It is clear that Koniev is in a position of readiness, except so far as Breslau blocks one of his main lines of communication. That, however, can hardly now be the reason for delay. Zhukov has certainly established bridge-heads across the Oder, but we may be sure that he has made no attempt to break out from them or we should have heard of it from German sources even if Moscow as usual made no announcement until substantial success had been achieved. To my mind, though, of course, it is pure surmise, the somewhat intriguing delay in the development of the Russian attack towards Berlin indicates a timing programme arranged between the High Commands of the Eastern and Western Fronts. Zhukov and Koniev, standing poised, contain the bulk of what remains of the German armies, and every day the Allied offensive in the west is closing up behind it, making retreat southwards increasingly difficult.

In particular, General Eisenhower's southern wing operating in the Main and Neckar valleys threatens to break into the valley of the upper Danube, while on the other side Tolbukhin and Malinovsky are pressing up its middle reaches. These encircling arms are still 300 miles apart, but an advance of about 100 miles by the latter to Regensburg and by Tolbukhin of the same distance to Linz would cut the main lines of communication of the German northern armies with the projected fortress region of the south.

Meanwhile, the advance of Eisenhower's central and northern forces makes it increasingly difficult for the enemy in the north to disengage without exposing the rear and communications of the forces facing Zhukov and Koniev. If the Germans, therefore, seriously contemplate withdrawing to the south every day the danger of the manoeuvre becomes greater, and every day a break-through by Zhukov and Koniev on the flank of a retreating army would promise more decisive results than if effected prematurely. That is why I think they are biding their time, waiting for the moment at which they can strike most effectively. There may also be political motives which render it advisable that Russian armies should not advance beyond the zone of occupation assigned to them, and perhaps it is desirable that Berlin should be entered simultaneously by the combined forces of the Allies. Changes in the machinery of control might thus be avoided.

Enemy's Best Available Troops Assembled to Oppose Crossing

Montgomery's crossing of the Rhine was effected after deliberate and meticulous preparation with the knowledge that the enemy had assembled all his best available troops to oppose it. No precautions could be neglected, and in particular it was essential that a bridge-head once secured should rapidly be reinforced in strength. Immediate deep penetration was of less importance. As a consequence when the moment for a break-out from the bridge-head arrived there were ample troops to support the thrusts, and bridges available.

General Patton's crossing, on the other hand, was only made possible by his annihilation of the enemy's forces on the western bank in the Saar-Moselle triangle, which left the line of the Rhine in this sector practically undefended. His crossing was hardly opposed, and his armoured spearheads were able to make deep penetration before encountering serious opposition; consequently there was no need to establish a secure bridge-head. But few bridges could be established immediately, and it took time for his main bodies to close up and for his communications to develop. His spearheads made amazing progress of immense importance through country where any delay might have enabled resistance to be organized, but, as was to be expected, when resistance was encountered a pause became necessary. It was, in the circumstances, of surprisingly short duration, but thereafter the rate of progress became less spectacular.

In General Hodges' snap capture of the bridge at Remagen there was no question of selecting the point of crossing, and although the enemy was completely surprised, his resistance soon materialized. It was necessary, therefore, as in Montgomery's case, to fight for a bridge-head and to fill it with troops before a breakout could be attempted. But since, unlike Montgomery, General Hodges had no adequate bridging equipment immediately available, the build-up of his bridge-head took much longer. By the time he was ready to advance, however, General Patton's operations to the south and Montgomery's in the north had greatly reduced the enemy's power of resistance so that Hodges' armoured thrusts were almost as spectacular as those of Patton.

What is remarkable is that these three crossings, involving operations of very different type should, as they were exploited, have been so admirably co-ordinated. The enemy nowhere was able to make a properly organized stand, and no awkward bulges developed which might have entailed waiting till the front could be to some degree straightened. On the contrary, it was the enemy who suddenly found himself in a dangerous salient in the Ruhr and unable to escape from it before the pincers closed round him. Every credit should, of course, be given to the commanders of individual armies, or groups of armies, for the manner in which they dealt with their special problems, but I cannot believe that under such diverse conditions the front of the offensive would have presented such a well-balanced picture if the highest co-ordinating authority, presumably General Eisenhower, had not retained control and been very loyally supported by his subordinates. A healthy rivalry no doubt existed, but it never appears to have been detrimental to the rapid development of well-conceived plans. Discipline in the highest ranks was clearly well maintained and, especially where Allied armies are working in close co-operation, that is not easy to achieve.

The same spirit of loyalty and mutual co-operation has been displayed by Marshal Stalin's subordinate commanders. It has been from the enemy's side that rumours of quarrels and dissension have come and the list of higher commanders whom Hitler has removed is long, although we may well believe that their suspension in many cases was due to justifiable protests against the Fuehrer's strategical conceptions. The old saying that "the fish gets rotten from the head" has seldom been more fully exemplified. But the processes of decay and disintegration would probably have been much more rapid but for the fanatical devotion of the German officer class.

WESTERN FRONT ON APRIL 6, 1945, when British armour of Field-Marshal Montgomery's 21st Group had reached the Weser, last natural barrier before the triangle whose corners are Hanover, Bremen and Hamburg—all vital in the Allied plan to engulf Germany. Hanover fell to Gen. Simpson's U.S. 9th Army on April 10. *By courtesy of News Chronicle*

Royal Navy's Fast Ferry Service on the Rhine

ENTIRELY NEW AMPHIBIOUS TECHNIQUE was brilliantly executed by British and U.S. Naval Forces to help the Allied crossings of the Rhine : a fast cross-river service to carry tanks, bulldozers and mobile guns had to be established before bridges even of a temporary nature could be thrown across. Royal Navy's craft consisted of L.C.M.s (Landing Craft Mechanized) and L.C.V.P.s (Landing Craft Vehicles Personnel) ; and these huge vessels, to operate 200 miles from the sea, had mostly to be transported over hundreds of miles of damaged roads.

The L.C.M. is a 50-ft. all-steel boat, with a crew of five and speed of 12 knots, weighs 26 tons, can carry any armoured vehicle up to a Sherman tank, or 6,000 81-mm. mortar projectiles, or 750 155-mm. shells, or 7,500 gallons of petrol. The L.C.V.P. is 36 ft. long, with crew of four, speed of ten knots, weighs nine tons, and can carry 50 combat-equipped troops, or one bulldozer, or one 105-mm. infantry cannon and one 57-mm. anti-tank gun, or two 75-mm. howitzers, or 1,000 gallons of petrol in five-gallon cans.

These had to be launched mostly from muddy banks, and manoeuvred against strong currents. Operations were under the overall direction of Admiral Sir Harold M. Burrough, K.C.B., K.B.E., D.S.O., Allied Naval C.-in-C. of the Expeditionary Forces.

BRITISH NAVAL OFFICERS conferred in a Rhineland forest while organizing the momentous crossings. The senior officer of the British Naval Units was Captain P. G. H. James, R.N. (1, centre). This base was administered by Royal Marines, and craft from it were soon operating. Ratings lend a hand in lowering a landing vessel into the Rhine (2) by means of a powerful mobile derrick.

The White Ensign flew as a captain of the Royal Army Service Corps directed the crossings through a microphone (3) ; in the background British engineers were building a Bailey bridge. With a depth charge exploding close astern, U.S. navy men patrolled the river (4) in search of mines and enemy-laid explosives intended to blow up our pontoons.

Photos, British Official, British Newspaper Pool, Associated Press

REAR-ADMIRAL R. R. McGRIGOR ON THE BRIDGE of the carrier Campania (left) during the fiercest air attack on an Arctic convoy in two years, reported on March 31, 1945. Carrying 500 Norwegians rescued from Soroy (see story in page 761), the convoy was attacked by both aircraft and U-boats; Fleet Air Arm fighters secured many Ju.88s. In the convoy was the carrier Nairana (right), seen in heavy seas. *Photos, British Official*

THE WAR AT SEA

by **Francis E. McMurtrie**

AFTER the action in the East China Sea on April 7 it becomes clear that the setting sun is now a more appropriate emblem for the Imperial Japanese Navy than the rising sun, which has hitherto constituted its flag. It is difficult to follow the conception of strategy which induced the Japanese High Command to order to sea on that date a weak and unbalanced naval force, destitute of any form of air cover, when powerful Allied fleets were known to be within striking distance. In the case of H.M.S. Prince of Wales and Repulse, in December 1941, the situation was such that grave risks had to be taken by the British admiral in the hope of intercepting enemy transports; but no such considerations existed to influence the enemy on April 6.

Late in the afternoon of that day a strong force of Japanese aircraft attacked Allied ships and shore installations in the vicinity of Okinawa. Though attacks were pressed home with desperation, they were successful only to the extent of sinking three U.S. destroyers. Damage was inflicted on other destroyers and smaller vessels. As the result of the energetic counter-measures taken, 55 enemy planes were brought down by American fighters and 61 by the anti-aircraft guns of the fleet. By the evening the attacks had been definitely defeated.

JAPANESE Admiral's Folly Was Exploited by Allied Forces

No sea activity appears to have been detected at this stage; but early next morning American reconnaissance aircraft observed a Japanese naval force, comprising the battleship Yamato, a cruiser of the Agano class, one other small cruiser and a number of destroyers, passing to the southward of Kyushu, the westernmost island of Japan, on a W. or S.W. course, towards the East China Sea.

Possibly reports from the survivors of the previous day's air attack had persuaded the Japanese admiral that the Allied forces had been rendered incapable of dealing a serious blow at his weak and ill-balanced force. Even so, it was the height of folly to have neglected to provide for contingencies by ordering land-based aircraft to keep in close touch with the force in case of need.

Naturally, such a golden opportunity was seized by the U.S. Commander-in-Chief, who at once dispatched a fast force of aircraft carriers, under Vice-Admiral Marc Mitscher, in the direction of the enemy. Contact was established about noon, when Admiral Mitscher's aircraft began a series of intensive attacks on the Japanese. Anti-aircraft fire from the Yamato and her consorts was intense, but there was no sign of air opposition. Hit by about eight torpedoes, besides bombs and rockets, the Yamato ultimately sank at a spot some 50 miles south-west of Cape Satanomi, the southernmost point of Kyushu. This would be somewhere to the westward of Yakushima, one of the largest of the group of islands extending in a S.W. direction from Kyushu. Both the enemy cruisers and three of their destroyers were sunk in action with the American aircraft, and three more destroyers were on fire when last seen.

NEWS of this defeat was received by Japan's new premier, 77-year-old Admiral Suzuki, with the gloomy statement that, "The war has come to its most important and crucial stage, and warrants not the least bit of optimism for our nation's survival." Certainly the chances of the fleet being able to do much to help the country out of its troubles seem to be slender. By the loss of the Yamato, the only modern battleship left after the sinking of the Musasi in the battle for Leyte last October, it is calculated that Japan's naval strength is reduced to five old battleships, the Nagato, Hyuga, Ise, Haruna and Kongo; five or six aircraft carriers; about ten cruisers; and a doubtful number of destroyers. Any one of the several main divisions in which the Allied fleets in the Pacific are organized should be capable by itself of dealing with the entire Japanese Navy in its present plight.

Though the enemy defeat was inevitable, it certainly would not have come so swiftly had it not been for the ineptitude with which naval operations have been conducted by our Eastern foes. How far the supremacy of the Army in the conduct of affairs may have contributed to this is not known; but instances of mismanagement are plentiful. Thus, after the sinking of H.M.S. Hermes, Dorsetshire and Cornwall in April 1942, the Japanese fleet was withdrawn from the Indian Ocean just as it seemed possible that it might succeed in enveloping and destroying Admiral Sir James Somerville's hastily collected force. The backbone of that force, as the admiral has since stated, was composed of the four slow and somewhat antiquated battleships of the Royal Sovereign class.

In its various engagements with United States forces in the Solomon Islands area the Japanese Navy never concentrated in full strength, with the result that its substance was gradually frittered away in side-shows. When it came to a full-scale engagement, in the Philippines last October, enemy forces arrived on the scene separately from different directions and were each beaten in turn. In short, Japanese naval strategy has been found wanting on nearly every occasion of critical importance.

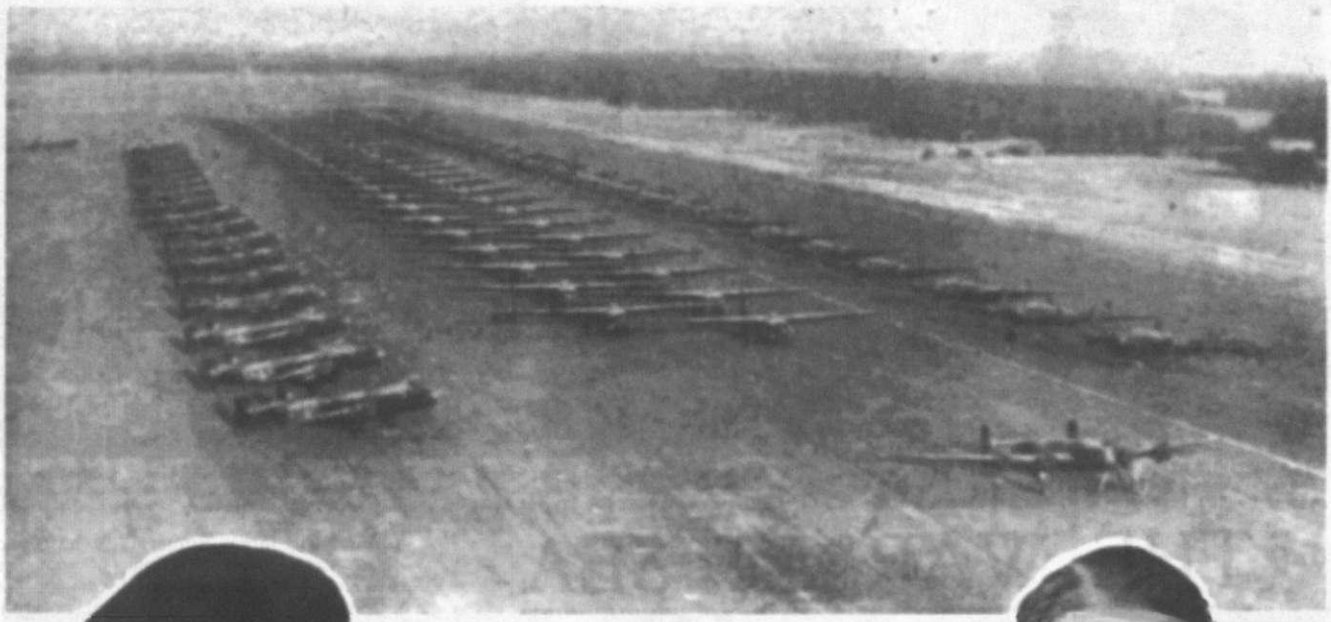
WARSHIPS Transferred by U.S. and Britain to Soviet Navy

Messages from Moscow recently disclosed the fact, already known to a great many people in this country and the United States, that these two countries last year transferred a number of warships to the Soviet Navy under Lend-Lease arrangements. Originally it had been suggested that some of the ships of the Italian Navy surrendered in September 1943 should be given to the Russians; but the latter apparently had more confidence in British and American naval design and construction.

Ships which were transferred are understood to have included the battleship Royal Sovereign, of 29,150 tons, launched in 1915; she had been earmarked for replacement when war began, but is a powerful and well-protected vessel. The principal American ship presented is the 7,050-ton cruiser Milwaukee, launched in 1921. These two ships have been renamed Arkhangelsk and Murmansk respectively. Eight destroyers of the American flush-deck design, which were given to this country in 1940 in exchange for the lease of a number of Atlantic bases, have also passed into Russian hands. They are believed to include the Lincoln and St. Albans, which until recently operated under the Norwegian flag, and six others of similar type. They are now known as the Derzki—Audacious—class.

SEVERAL British submarines of the Ursula type, of 540 tons, are also said to have been included in the transfer; they are now known as the Pchelka—Bee—class. Another submarine of a slightly larger design, the Sunfish, is also reported to have gone to Russia. A dozen or more motor torpedo boats, 12 steel submarine chasers, 70 wooden submarine chasers, and a number of wooden minesweepers have been acquired from the United States Navy.

Men Who Planned the Great Airborne Landings



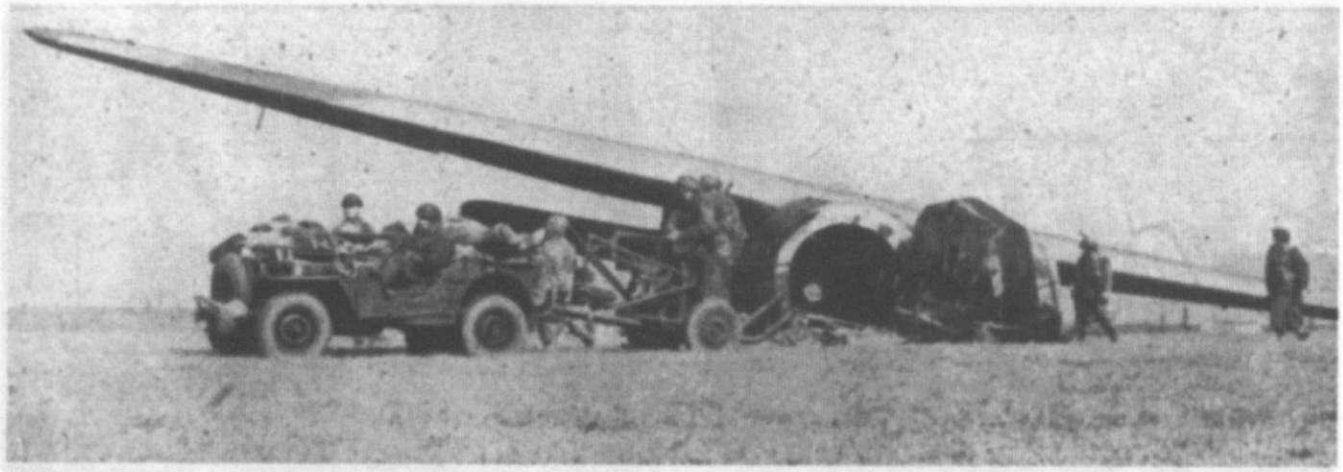
GLIDER TRAIN WAS 500 MILES LONG when the mighty Allied airborne armada descended east of the Rhine on March 24, 1945; Hamilcar gliders and Halifax towing-craft (1) lined up on an R.A.F. airfield in England ready to take off.

Curtiss Commandos (C.46 type), carrying 36 paratroopers instead of the usual 18, were employed for the first time. This 4,000 h.p. supertransport has a range of 1,800 miles, a speed of over 250 m.p.h. and can lift almost 4 tons; it drops parachute troops from both sides simultaneously. (See illus. p. 161, Vol. 6).

Col. G. J. S. Chatterton (2), commanding the Glider Pilot Regiment, evolved the new plan for the glider attack on the Rhine defences. Air Vice-Marshal Scarlett-Streatfeild (3), A.O.C. 38 Group, responsible for the Rhine airborne operations. Gliders down near Hamminkeln (4); parachute troops prepared for action (5) north of Wesel.

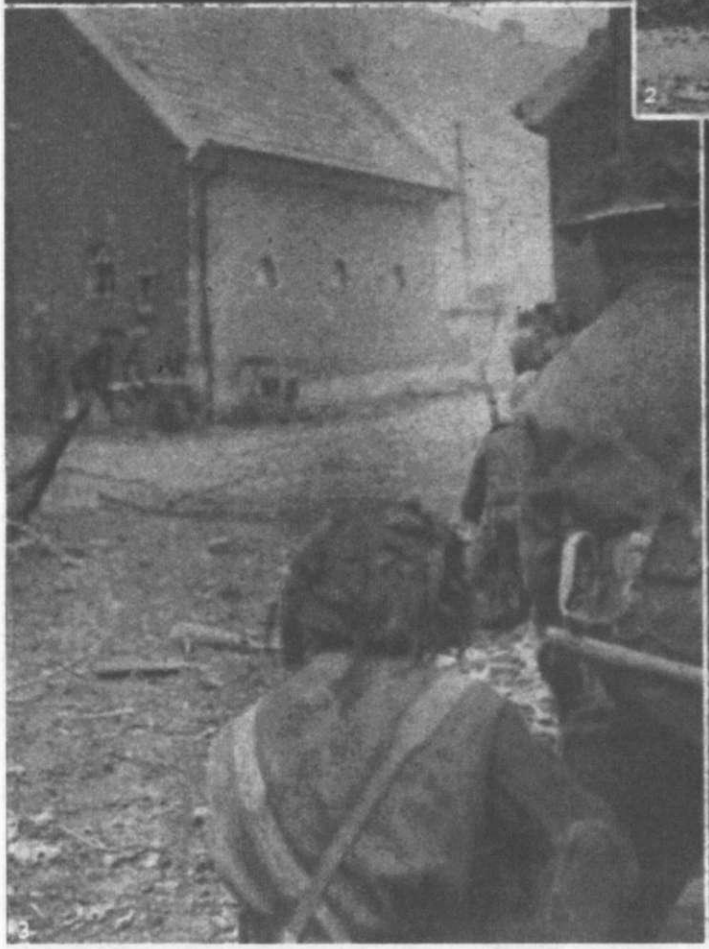
Photos, British Official, Newspaper Pool, News Chronicle

From the Skies Into Action Beyond the Rhine



WHEN TROOPS OF THE BRITISH 6TH AIRBORNE DIVISION descended east of the Rhine, north-west of Wesel, on March 24, 1945, in the Allies' greatest airborne operation, men and mechanism were ready for instant action; immediately on touching-down this quick-firing gun (1) left its glider. Airborne troops prepared to dash into blazing Hamminkeln (2), between Rees and Wesel, which they captured within a few hours. Two of our men inspected a sign-post outside the town (3), while civilians quietly submitted to a round-up (4). PAGE 777 *Photos, British Official*

With Our 7th Armoured Division in the West



THE FUEHRER'S FACE AS THEIR TROPHY, doughty warriors of the British 7th Armoured Division relaxed (1) at Gemon, Westphalia, which they entered during a security black-out on Western Front news. Against the background of a village church near Stadtlohn (occupied April 1, 1945), heavy armour took up position (2) as our men picked off stray snipers (3). An upturned kitchen stove (4) served as cover at Bocholt during the final clearance of this north Rhineland town on March 29.

Photos, British Official, British Newspaper Pool

Dortmund-Ems Canal Now a Negligible Ditch

BRITISH 6th AIRBORNE DIVISION crossed the famous 150-miles long Dortmund-Ems canal, ten miles south of Osnabruck, on April 2, 1945, after retreating Nazis had destroyed all the bridges. Thanks to persistent draining of the canal by heavy bombers of the R.A.F., the water was only knee-deep, as this photograph of airborne troops transporting a wounded companion shows. Major-Gen. E. L. Bols (inset), Commander of the 6th Airborne Division, is one of the youngest of our generals.

Photos, British Official, Newspaper Pool

What Speedy Liberation Means to the Dutch

In occupied Holland nothing is normal. Impoverishment, soul-numbing weariness and dreariness and hunger are afflictions common to all—whilst the people await, with anguished patience, the day of liberation. A Dutch Correspondent in that Nazi-oppressed land, writing specially for "The War Illustrated," in early April, indicates how you would spend your day if there.

You rise. Let's hope you have had a good night, that you have at least sufficient blankets to protect you against the cold. But that is by no means certain, because in many places the Germans have requisitioned all textiles.

As it is spring-time you can rise comparatively early. In the winter this was more difficult, because here there is no electricity and your stock of candles is exhausted. Therefore you have spent the long nights of December, January and February in bed. It was not pleasant, because no one can sleep sixteen hours at a stretch, so you have spent a good deal of time worrying. And hunger kept you awake.

But it is spring-time. The sun shines in the room. Fortunately the sun is not affected by human folly. The sun is, at any rate, "normal." And it would be normal for you if you went to the kitchen to prepare your porridge. But for months you have had no porridge oats, no milk and no gas.

QUEEN WILHELMINA OF THE NETHERLANDS received a rousing welcome when she returned on a visit to liberated Holland, on March 13, 1945, after an absence of nearly five years. In Sluis (above) she was cheered everywhere, children waving flags, as she walked among them chatting informally. Life in the "hunger provinces" is described in this page. *Photo, British Official*

And yet you have been lucky! At the beginning of the week you stood in a queue for an hour and a half for the baker's shop to open, and you got your full ration. You are an old customer and the baker winks at you. Every member of the family has had his full bread ration this week—one loaf, and each gets one thin slice for breakfast. Some people take a slice and a half, but you think it more economical to take another half slice for your "elevenses."

Tea? There is a tin containing tablets with which you can turn hot water into a brown liquid without affecting the taste. An excellent substitute! But how will you get hot water? You have a special cooking stove which in the cold months never raised the temperature of the room above 45 degrees, but on which you can heat four or six pans. You have no fuel, of course. At any rate no normal fuel, because there has been no fuel distribution since the middle of 1944.

Fortunately, somewhere in the neighbourhood a house has collapsed and you have been able to buy some firewood. This has swallowed up the last of your savings. Or you have felled a tree or taken down a fence. One of my friends did a neat little job: he pulled a couple of heavy wooden posts out of the ground in front of a shelter used by the German military. For weeks these have stood in his living-room to dry. Anyone stealing wood is immediately shot . . .; officially, but one often "gets away with it." But you have no choice—you *must* have fuel to prepare your food. You will probably not go to work, because business and industry are virtually paralysed.

Your water main is clogged. (How long shall we have our water supply? In many places the water has been cut off for several hours in the day.) The plumber comes only when you offer him a sandwich or a cup of soup. That means he does *not* come. But you will have to see him today: perhaps he will come when you give him a darning needle which your wife can spare.

Then you go with your pan to the communal kitchen. You get a spoonful of soup or mashed greens and potatoes for each member of your family. Soup? This usually consists of water with a few green pieces floating in it and sometimes a slice of carrot. But soup is a delicacy compared with the mashed greens and potatoes, as the never-failing sugar-beet gives them a sickly sweet taste. Moreover, the family's digestive organs can no longer cope with those indigestible turnips.

There are no potatoes. You have surrendered your ration vouchers to the communal kitchen. Yesterday you had a violent argument with the man in the flat above, who maintained that the municipal food office give you less than you should have. You have denied it, because the communal kitchen is a Dutch institution and not a German one. Moreover, the municipal food office deals extensively in the black market.

In the afternoon you and a friend plan to make a trip to North Holland, about 50 miles. You still have a blue suit, which you may be able to exchange for wheat. You become very angry because you have heard that a certain farmer has *sold* wheat. The scoundrel asked approximately £530 for 4 bushels. Fortunately, one morning the "underground boys" gave him the biggest hiding of his life.

You still have a bicycle, in spite of requisitions made by the Germans and the "Landwacht." But you have no tires. Six months ago you could get pneumatic tires for about £14 each. You thought it too expensive, but you are sorry now. Then you tried it with wooden tires, but that is worse than riding on the rims. Suppose you get the wheat, how are you going to carry it? The best plan for you and your friend will probably be to hire a barrow and to take turns in sitting on it and pushing it.

Bulbs Fried in Oil for Supper

The relief organization instituted by the churches has distributed bulbs. You have also got a couple of pounds (although you do not belong to any church). Your wife has fried them in a little oil, the only fat you have received since last November. With three slices of bread it makes a grand supper.

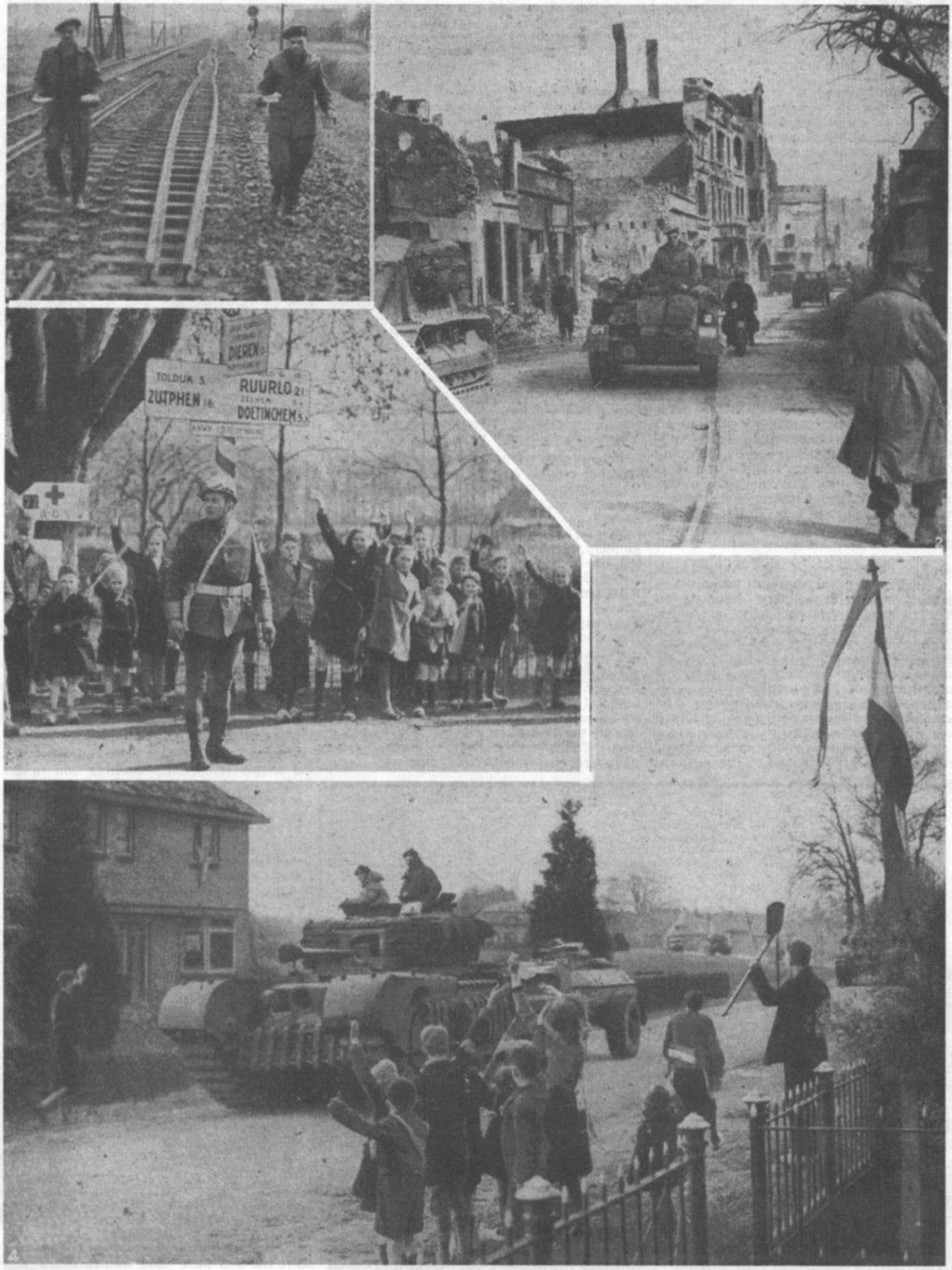
Let us hope that on your way to the farmer's you will find someone who is interested in your suit. Because if you do not get a small stock of food soon you will not be able to carry on, and your parents (if they are still alive) will die of hunger. Those hunger expeditions are no fun. Frequently one sees people collapsing by the wayside.

Six o'clock! Now comes the highlight of the day. Hasn't the paper come yet? But you have long since ceased to read the official newspaper. Far better get your news from the underground sources, and you don't need the newspaper for the food announcements. Someone will tell you the numbers of those miserable bread and potato vouchers. Therefore the stencilled paper called Het Parool, Je Maintiendrai, Nederland zal Herrijzen (The Netherlands shall rise again), Trouw or Het Oranje Bulletin (The Orange Bulletin) is *the* newspaper.

The paper tells you *why* Holland's food situation is desperate. The Huns have blighted the country like a swarm of locusts. Then they used hunger as a means of breaking our morale. They deliberately allowed loads of potatoes to rot, rather than divide them among the population. But the paper says: "Carry on!" It is read out during mealtimes in the family circle . . . The Americans are advancing in the Far East. Berlin bombed again. The resistance movement has blown up a recruiting office which organized deportations to Germany. Monty is going for the Huns hot and strong. "It's going well, boys. Carry on!"

But the number of those who can no longer believe in liberation is growing. Yes, "it's going well," but *when* are we going to be liberated? When we are all dead and buried . . . "Buried" . . . There are no more coffins and no funeral carriages. We say, "May God grant that we will be liberated before we die of starvation or before we are so far gone that we are beyond aid." The German has not broken Holland, but hunger is stronger than strength of mind. Four and a half million Dutchmen in the "hunger provinces" remain at their posts. The enemy cannot break us, but tonight hunger will keep us awake again.

Canadians On the Way to the V-Bomb Bases



TORN UP BY THE "TRACK RIPPER," NAZI SABOTAGE WEAPON, the railway lines near Emmerich (1), 20 miles south-east of Arnhem and captured on March 29, 1945, were rendered useless by the enemy retreating before the Canadian 1st Army on the northern shoulder of the lower Rhine sector. British and Canadian armour passing through shattered Emmerich (2). Netherlands children (3) cheered Canadian troops and armour hurrying through the Hummelo area (4) to the V-bomb bases at Zutphen (seized April 8).

Photos, Planet News

Feats of the Royal Regiment of Artillery

The one-word motto of the Royal Artillery—Ubique—means "everywhere." And that is where individual R.A. regiments are expected to be ! It has no fixed composition in the field, and under its command may be formations from other Allied artillery groups. Something of the Royal Regiment's great story in this war is told by MARK PRIESTLEY.

WESTERN Front barrages are now synchronized by the Greenwich time signal pips, sent out on certain radio services every hour of the day and night so that gunners may correctly set their battery watches. This has been done ever since D-Day (June 6, 1944), at the special request of Field-Marshal Montgomery—and the precision is worthy of the heroes of the Royal Regiment of Artillery. Whenever the battle mounts to a fresh phase of fury, as in the 1,000-gun barrage that heralded the Allied break across the River Roer (see illus. page 712), the gunners live and sweat through hours of dangerous glory. How comes it, then, that the activities of the Royal Artillery are still largely anonymous ?

The numbers by which they are identified have a less personal touch than the historic names and county associations borne by infantry regiments. The 94th, 112th and 179th Field Regiments, all of them West Country units, were among the first to go into action on German soil, and an Anti-Tank Battery had the honour of providing the first units to cross the Rhine. The 181st Field Regiment, too, has collected no less than four Military Crosses, six Military Medals, a D.S.O. and four C.-in-C.'s certificates for gallantry all within three months, a notable record of valour.

IN the channels of the Netherlands, artillery and naval personnel have worked together with land artillery mounted on landing craft. It has been the Navy's job to keep the ships aimed and give the orders to fire ; the gunners man the guns and do the rest. The technique has been successfully used in covering landing forces before the establishment of shore artillery posts was practicable, and perhaps results were best exemplified in a recent battle on the Dutch coast when infantry faced a German attack at brigade strength for 15 hours without yielding an inch of ground. The seaward gunners brought fire to bear on minute-by-minute objectives as soon as they were signalled by their observation officers. "And the gunners saved the day," an infantry officer afterwards commented. "Not a doubt of it !"

AGAIN, a Scottish infantry regiment had scarcely taken a certain canal after hard fighting when they found the R.A. units coming forward for further action. The gunners were admittedly surprised to see infantrymen manning their posts in trenches, and an infantry sergeant gazed back in amazement at them. "You guns here already !" he exclaimed. "That's fine ! But we didn't think guns could cross that devil's ditch for hours !"

On another occasion, a Gun Position Officer's transport went forward in advance to establish a new position and gave a surprise to the Americans. "We thought you were Recce," they said. "Jerry's only just gone. You don't waste any time, do you ?"

Behind such tributes there lies the training that has created efficiency. The 181st Field Regiment, for example, was built around a converted infantry battalion and the men come from every walk of life. Today each man is an expert at his particular job, whether gunnery, signalling, wireless operating, driving, line-laying or acking, but each individual could do another man's job if necessary. All have become cogs in the great machine behind the shells, and their periods of inactivity have been all too few in the chase from Normandy into the Reich itself.

There is a Survey Regiment of the Royal Artillery which landed in Sicily and for nineteen months has been slogging slowly up Italy. Names like Ortona, Cassino, Florence and the Gothic Line recall but a few of the battles in which it has played a part. Theirs is the task of locating and observing enemy batteries. One way to do it is to sit out in forward observation posts, often under enemy fire, and wait for a gun-flash. When it is observed a geometrical bearing is taken and sent back to H.Q. (see illus. pages 205, 210). There the information is collated with "gen" from other posts. In time, when the locations have been checked, the guns receive a position and the enemy point is bombarded out of existence. Alternatively, in bad visibility, sound-ranging is worked out in a complicated system of microphones and wires on the ground.

The courage of the observation officers as they feel out the enemy positions, the skill of the signallers and line-layers, thus all form part of the successful work of the R.A. tanks moving forward, or enemy fire may tear the gun telephone lines to shreds and these have to be laid and relaid. In Italy, survey parties and layers have sometimes been lost in fifteen-foot snowdrifts, microphones have been removed by Nazi patrols, and sometimes it has been impossible to move equipment by truck or carrier. Then the drivers have had to drag four-hundredweight of equipment by blanket !

Just Ahead of the Foot-sloggers

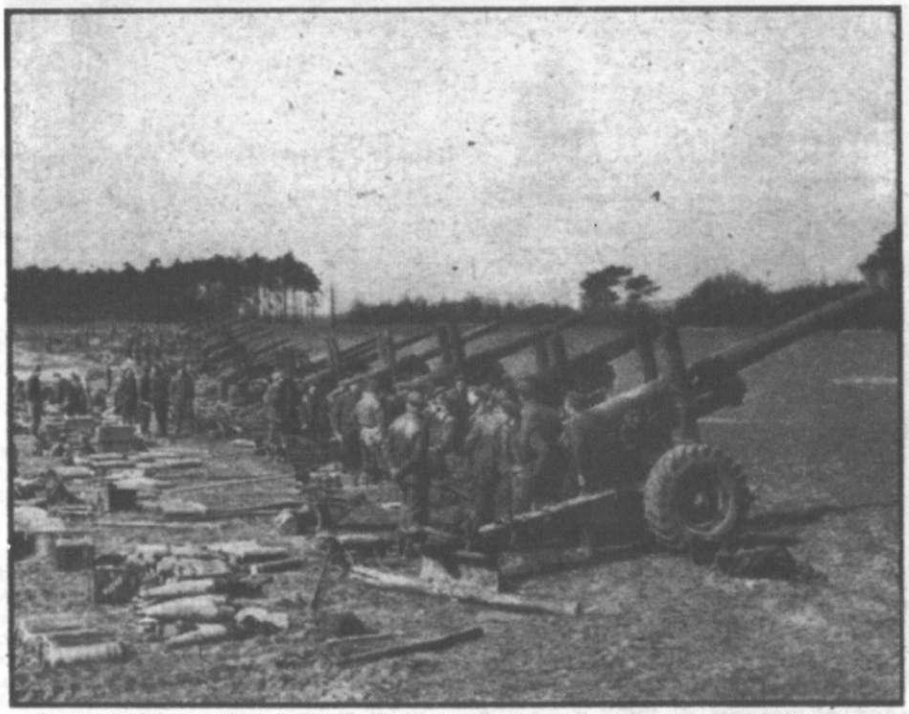
A barrage is often the outcome of weeks of watching and planning directed against enemy defences in depth. One artillery group has expended 5,600 shells in a day to this end. In other units, meeting normal demands for fire in battle, guns may fire more than 3,000 rounds each in three weeks "not somewhere near but on the target."

When a barrage supports an infantry attack, the line for opening fire may be just ahead of the foot-sloggers and shells must land in the right place. Too short, they would fall among the infantry ; too far, their effect would be wasted. Plotting the targets by the "acks" and laying the guns by the layers calls for and gets 100 per cent accuracy.

Add to this 100 per cent courage. For the enemy is similarly spotting and range-finding our own guns all the time. When Lance-Bombardier Jimmy McGuire received the M.M. it was because his section of a line had been cut no less than 70 times by enemy shellfire and he had kept the cable route mended. In another instance, a gun crew found the camouflage net of their gun ablaze ; the fire spread quickly over the whole gun-pit—and they leapt in and out of the flames to throw the ammunition clear.

ANOTHER group on a 9·2-in. gun were knocked about by fragments of a heavy calibre shell. Still they attempted to continue the action, until another enemy shell scored a direct hit on the emplacement and put the gun completely out of action. With communications severed, a message had to be run to an information point nearly 400 yards away on the other side of no man's land, which was being heavily shelled. The Number One on the gun took the message and brought up aid for the wounded.

Perhaps the gunner's saga can best be underlined by the story of the 90th Middlesex, now in North-West Europe. Veterans of the Battle of Britain, they were once exclusively ack-ack. Then their 3·7-in. guns were tested as field artillery. The experiment was brilliantly successful. Today the 90th is anti everything Nazi, whether in the sky, on the ground or in water, for the men who serve the 3·7s have been trained in the field role and share in fire tasks previously given mainly to 25-pounders. Since the 90th joined the B.L.A. it has fired 100,000 rounds at field targets, tank and troop concentrations

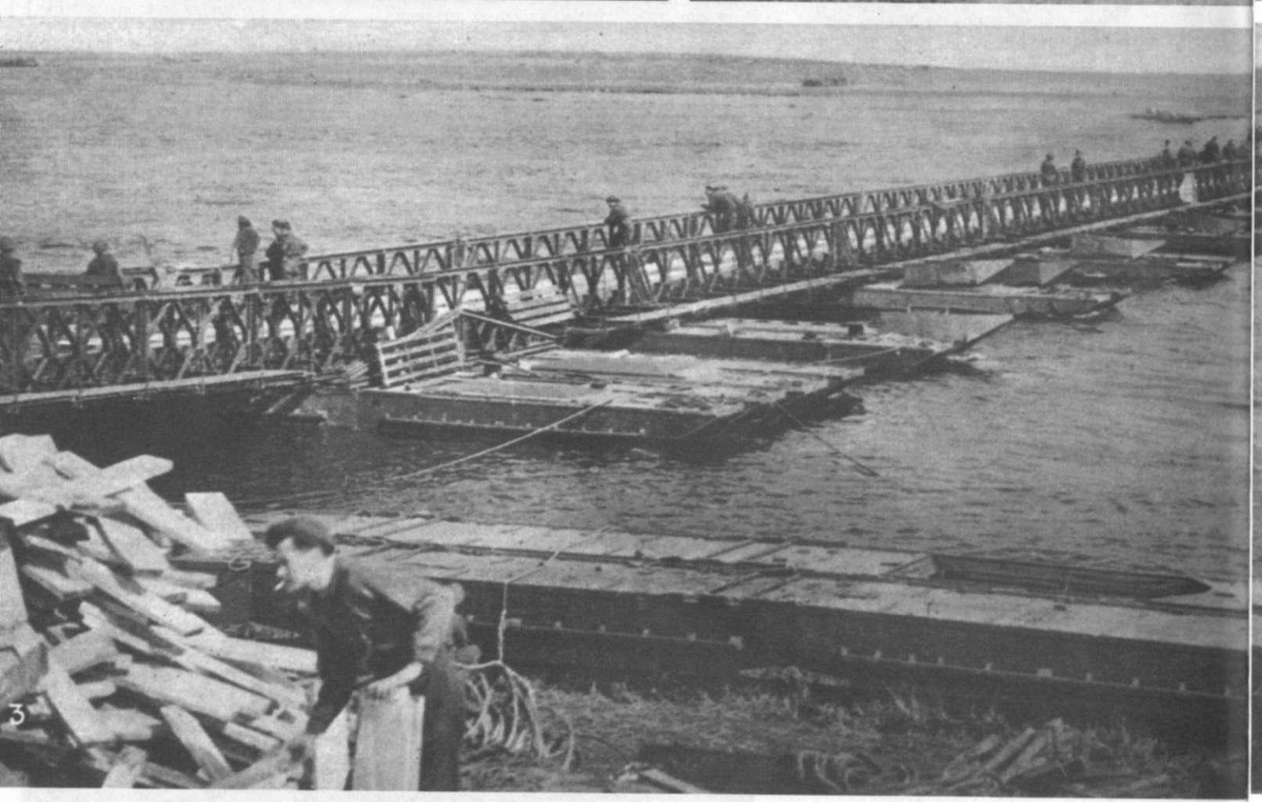


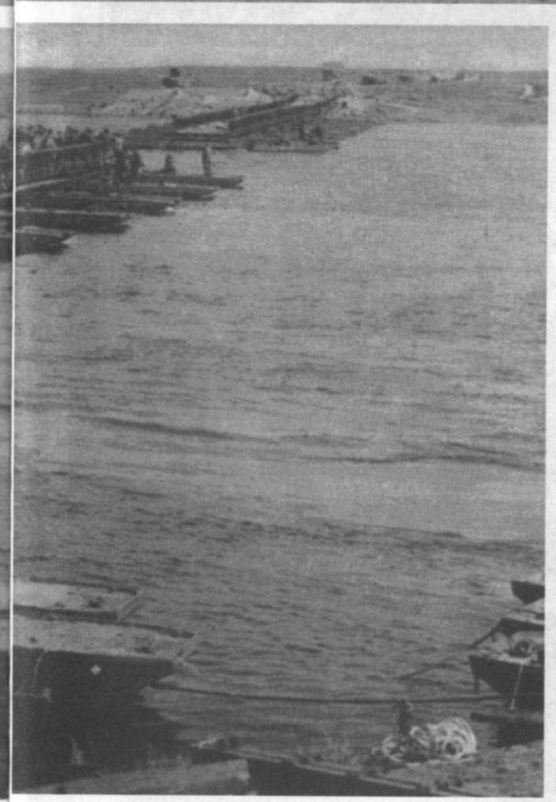
WATCH ON THE RHINE (NEW STYLE) as two medium batteries of the Royal Artillery lined up ready for the momentous crossings of March 23 24 ; the river embankment can be seen in the background. These 4·5-in. guns were of the type used against Rommel in the Western Desert in 1942-43, counterblast to the German 88-mm. gun. *Photo, British Official*

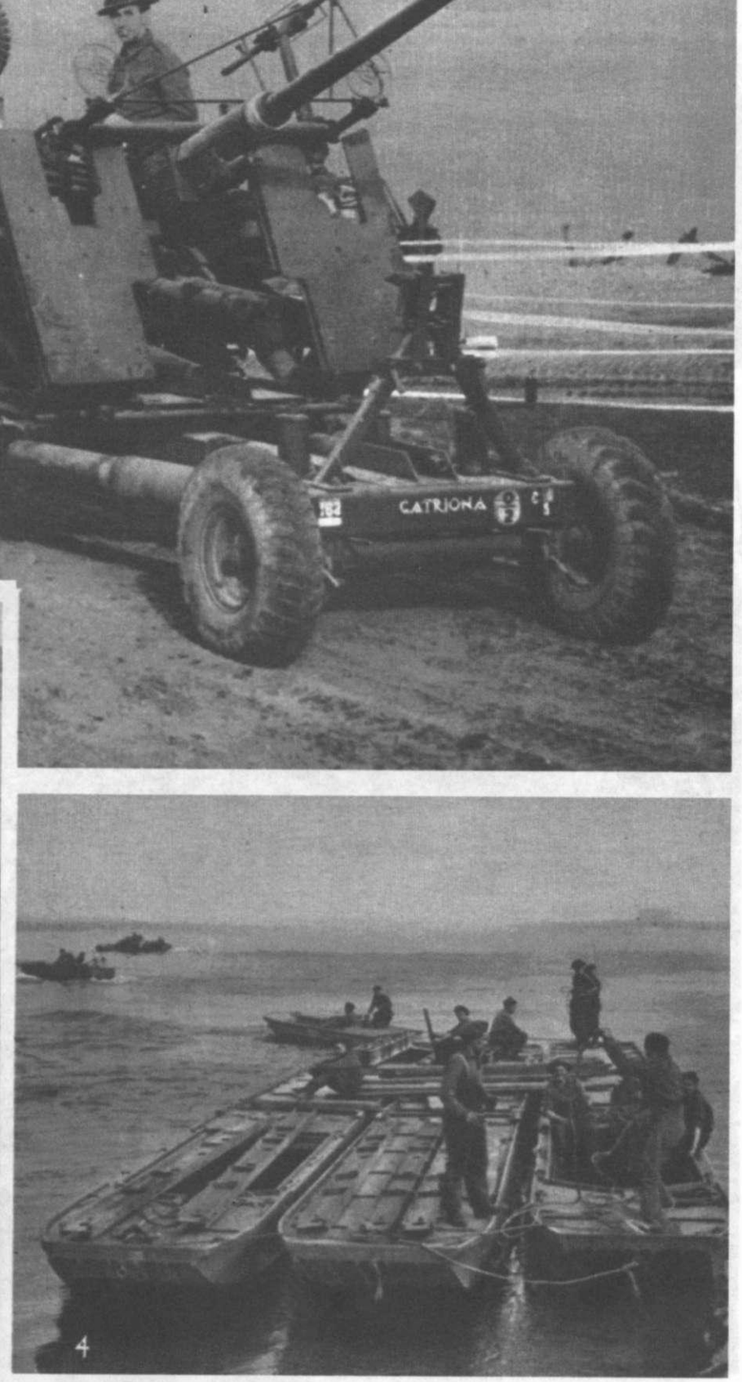
Photos, British Official, Planet News

Over the Rhine With Monty's Men

Opening of the final round of the war with Germany came on the night of March 23-24, 1945, when on a 25-mile front north of the Ruhr the Rhine was forced by Field-Marshal Montgomery's 21st Army Group. Among the first to cross were troops of the 15th and 51st Scottish Divisions. Jocks are seen (top right) leaving their assault craft. By the wrecked bridge at Wesel men of the Cheshire Regiment (bottom) landed from Buffaloes, which also carried supplies (top left) to the far side.







Royal Engineers Make Ferries and Bridges—

Twenty-one hours after men of the 15th Scottish Division had crossed Hitler's last great water barrier in the West, the first bridge had been completed and troops and supplies were pouring across. Well over 10,000 Sappers were engaged, and more than 1,000 lorries brought up the 5,300 feet of bridging and rafting. A self-propelled gun of a Highland Division anti-tank regiment embarks on a raft (1), and guns and supplies go over (2). The first Bailey pontoon bridge across the Rhine (3).

Photos, British Official, British Newspaper Pool, Planet News

—For 21st Army Group's Dramatic Leap

Amphibious craft scurried to and fro as engineers assembled pontoons (4) for the bridging. For this vital work of construction the men were intensively trained on Yorkshire rivers. In the darkness of the night before the assault, bulldozers cut approach roads to the bridge and ferry sites. Then, as assault troops took the plunge in their Buffaloes the Sappers moved forward to the banks with all their weighty gear. Within a few hours two ferries and three bridges were operating.

Our Spearheads Borne by Air and Water

Photos, British Official

Greatest air-swoop of the war carried glider and parachute troops of the famous British 6th Airborne Division beyond the Rhine in advance of the 2nd Army. Glider crew ready for action immediately after crash landing (top left). In Hamminkeln (top right), an anti-tank gun landed by glider is set up. 1st Commando Brigade crossed by boat at 10 p.m. on Mar. 23. ahead of any others, and by 2 a.m. had taken Wesel, where some of their 350 prisoners (bottom) crouch in a crater.

VIEWS & REVIEWS

Of Vital War Books

by Hamilton Fyfe

EVOLUTION is to me of all subjects the most interesting. It combines the elements of a first-class fairy-tale with the wonders of science. That is true not only of the evolution which is a process of Nature ; it applies equally to the development of machinery invented and constructed by man. Many, perhaps most, of these human inventions have been developed in response to the necessities of war. Sometimes it seems as if mankind exerted its powers to their utmost only in order to destroy and kill.

There is no more fascinating story of ingenuity in the overcoming of difficulties than that of the gradual perfecting of landing craft for the use of troops invading a country from the sea or across a wide river like the Rhine. Such craft are no new thing. Napoleon had a fleet of them at Boulogne when he thought of invading Britain. But if he could now see the difference between his flat-bottomed boats and the Buffaloes, the Alligators, and other types of amphibious warfare vehicle-vessels which are working today, he would gasp with astonishment.

STILL more amazed would he become if he were told that this progress was accomplished in a space of less than five years. Landing craft did not have a chance to develop normally, gradually, bit by bit. Building them was a rush job all the time. When this war began they scarcely could be said to exist. Some had been built in order to land troops and stores on the Gallipoli Peninsula and in Mesopotamia. But, says Mr. Gordon Holman in his book on the subject, called Stand By To Beach ! (Hodder & Stoughton, 7s. 6d.), " if anyone remembered landing craft in the twenty years' gap between 1918 and 1938 it was probably with a smile at the very idea of their freakishness."

Not till 1939, a month before this war started, did the first of a new kind of landing boat have its trials on the Clyde. These were built just in time to be employed for a purpose of which their designers and constructors never dreamed. They were needed, not to land British troops on beaches, but to take them off, in order to save them from the enemy. They did this in Norway in April 1940, and again at Dunkirk in the following month ; they were a very present help to those two melancholy evacuations.

Then came an illustration of the British quality which some call dogged courage and others call conceit—the quality that refuses to acknowledge, when we get into a tight place, just how tight that place is. At the moment when we seemed to be on the verge of disaster, when we had almost no defence for our island, not more than forty tanks, a very poor supply of ack-ack guns, and not nearly enough aircraft, we began to prepare for the day when we should turn the tables and strike at the Nazis on the continent of Europe. It reminds one of the immortal saying attributed to Foch at the time of the Battle of the Marne, but actually, I believe, much older : " My centre is giving ground ; my right retiring ; situation excellent ; I am attacking."

WE were not in a position to attack in 1940, but we did the next best thing—the thing that would have seemed crazy to the Huns if they had known about it : we set about making preparations for the day when we should attack. That we were going to do this some day was in all minds.

The trouble was that the shipyards were full up with what was considered to be—and at the time was—more urgent work. They could not be expected to do the whole job. So " the Admiralty set about organizing production in branches of British industry which had never before had any association with ships or the sea." The method of prefabrication was adopted. Parts were made by engineering works, furniture factories, carpentering shops, locomotive builders, firms that took orders for bridges and other large constructions, even wayside garage and repair outfits. Boats were built in sections, taken to the coast to be assembled.

All over the country the work went on and " many of the workmen and women who were engaged in this vast programme in its early stages must have wondered when and how the results of their labours would be put to use." Silence was, of course, essential, and they kept silent.

Build-up of a Great Invasion Fleet

Although our supply of tanks was still lamentably short in spite of the vast effort being put into their construction, some of the new craft were designed to carry tanks. There really is something sublime about the way the British race disregards difficulties and even disasters, and fixes attention on the day when these will be inflicted on the foe.

THE tank landing craft are about 200 feet in length and about 30 wide, with a displacement of about 350 gross tons.

Nearly all the weight is aft, and this helps to trim the vessel for landing purposes. A large ramp set at an angle of around 45 degrees forms the squared-off bows, and where the lower part of the ramp enters the water the craft draws no more than three feet. The whole of the flat bottom of the vessel slopes gently until in the stern she draws seven feet. The ramp in the bows is hinged at the bottom and can be lowered quickly by hand or power-driven winches. When it is down it provides a runway on to the beaches for the vehicles carried.

Two-thirds of the space is available for tanks, which are lashed to the metal decks to prevent them from moving while aboard. The craft is powered by two 500 h.p. Diesel engines. The living quarters of the crew are right aft and can only be described as cramped.

But the crews, consisting of two officers and ten petty officers and men, make the best of it. " Although they have to live very much on top of one another, there is the usual standard of naval discipline to be observed," and they turn out smartly when occasion calls for smartness.

As in all small ships, there is a fine comradeship added to, no doubt, in this case by the fact that almost invariably the men are " hostilities only " ratings, and the officers have earned their promotion after serving on the lower deck.

Cpl. G. E. TANDY of the Royal Marines (second from left) and three of his comrades display pieces of the damaged assault craft which the young corporal, as coxswain, steered in the remarkable manner related in this page.

The first time the new types of landing craft were used for attack was at the end of 1941, when the Lofoten Islands, off Norway, were raided. They behaved well, did all that was expected of them. So they did at Dieppe in August of the next year. This was the final testing for the " new branch of the Navy," and " it proved a very hard test indeed," but " they came through with flying colours." All the tanks were put down on the beaches, though in places the fire from the shore batteries was heavy ; and when the time came to take off the troops who had been fighting up the cliffs and on the top, " the naval crews displayed outstanding gallantry."

We learned a lot from that operation at Dieppe, which in itself was such an unhappy failure. It helped greatly towards later operations which were almost complete successes. In Sicily, for instance, the landing craft assisted in putting ashore within forty-eight hours of the first assault 80,000 men, 300 tanks, 7,000 vehicles and 700 guns. Now there appeared a new type " produced with amazing speed in American shipbuilding yards." These were on a far bigger scale and they looked more like ships because they had shaped bows. But these bows were, in fact, two huge doors. When these opened, a ramp came down as it did in the smaller vessels. The interior was like a vast hall or warehouse ; nothing was allowed to interfere with the need for loading space.

Time went on, and at last D-Day arrived. All the craft needed were ready. All the men required had been thoroughly trained. They were about to do, as the late Admiral Sir Bertram Ramsay put it, " what Philip of Spain failed to do, what Napoleon tried and failed to do, and what Hitler never had the courage to try." They were about to take part in " the greatest amphibious operation in history " (another of Admiral Ramsay's stirring phrases). How well, how skilfully, how bravely they did it, everyone knows.

WHERE all behaved so magnificently it may seem invidious to single out any deed of heroism. But I must relate one such deed because it was performed not in the heat of battle, when the blood is summoned up and the sinews stiffened by danger, but in conditions of a totally different colour. Cpl. George Tandy of the Royal Marines was coxswain of an assault landing craft which had to travel seven miles before putting its load of 32 soldiers ashore on the Normandy coast. The sea was running high ; the steering-wheel was smashed. What could be done ?

Tandy knew. He slipped over the stern into the water, " placed one foot on the rudder guard-rail and directly controlled the rudder with his other foot. He had only the shallow rim of wood round the stern of the boat and a little iron cleat to hang on to. In this way he faced a seven-mile journey to the French shore."

Nor was that all. When he had landed his passengers, Tandy decided to take his craft back to its parent ship in the same way. He did that, too, and after being in the water for nearly three hours he was not more than half alive. Yet he declared that any one of his shipmates would have done as he did if they had had the opportunity.

How find words to fit such devotion, such determined, dogged courage ? As usual, Shakespeare supplies them. " What a piece of work is a man ! "

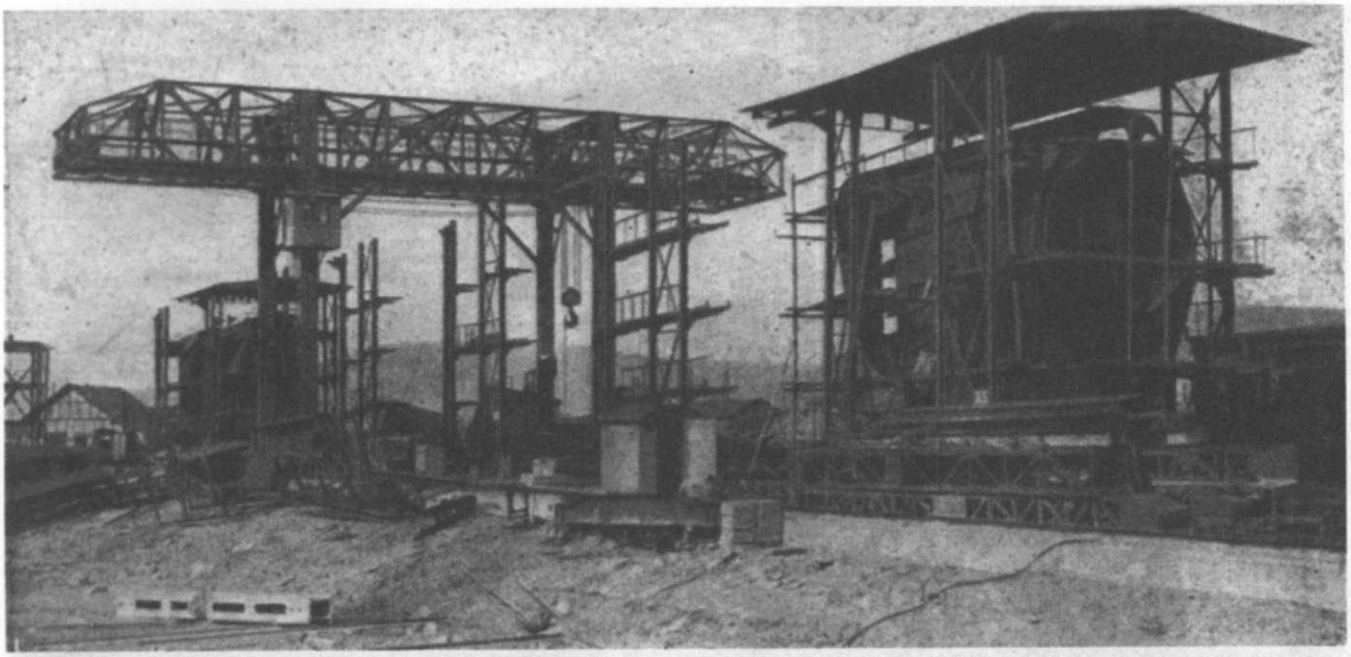
Allied Military Control at Work in Wesel

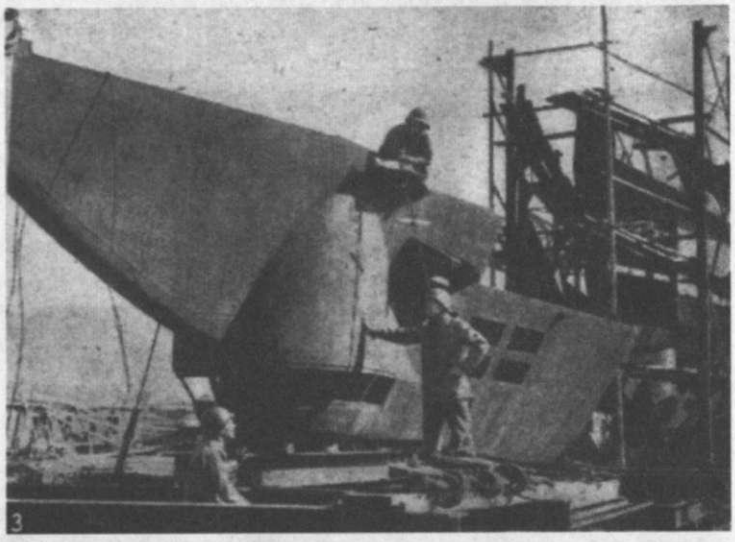
AT LIPPSTADT, when the U.S. 9th and 1st Armies entered it on April 1, 1945, thus closing a ring of steel round the Ruhr, the local police had fled and the people were engaged in an orgy of looting; women, seen emerging from a big wine store (1) joined in. Villagers at Haltern were huddled outside their sandhill shelter (2) as Allied troops arrived on March 29.

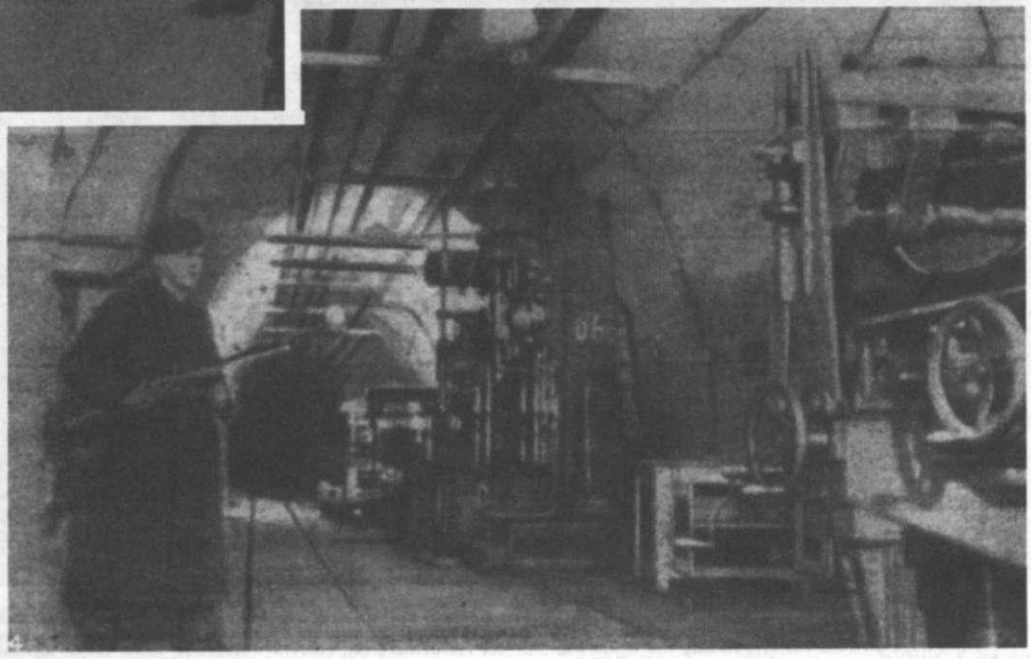
A joint Allied military control took over in ruined Wesel (captured by British Commandos on March 24), appointing German civilians to enforce their instructions to remaining townsfolk. A sergeant of the Middlesex Regiment and a U.S. private stuck up the Allied proclamation (3); such notices must all be posted up in the presence of at least one German civilian. The British officer commanding at Wesel issued his instructions to German civilians (4) chosen by their own townspeople to represent them with the Allied military government.

Photos, British Official, British Newspaper Pool, Keystone

War Factories Wrenched from the Hun Intact





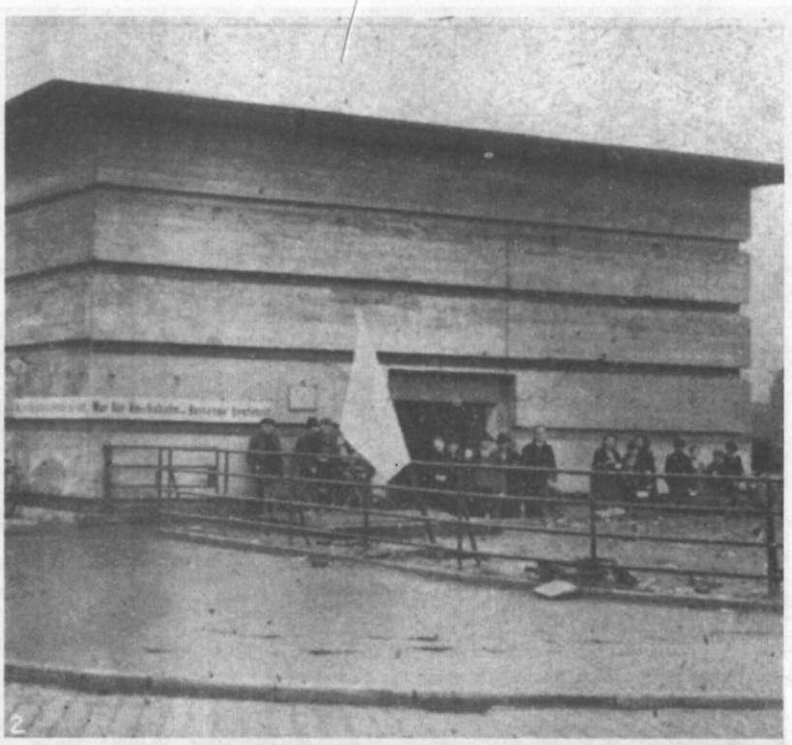


PREFABRICATED U-BOATS were among the booty taken by the U.S. 1st Army at Rheinbrohl, east of the Rhine and north of Coblenz, during General Hodges' big push in late March, 1945; partly finished submarines are seen on the stocks (1) at the factory from which their predecessors were dispatched to coastal assembly yards. Among the prisoners released were Russian slave-workers, including women and girls, who celebrated their freedom with dancing (2).

Of special interest to these U.S. Army engineers (3) was the prefabricated section of a U-boat. Prefabricated U-boats came in for their mightiest pounding on March 30, 1945, when 1,400 Fortresses and Liberators of the U.S. 8th Air Force struck at Bremen, Hamburg and Wilhelmshaven in the greatest U.S. attack to date on naval installations in the West. On the Eastern front, a Soviet soldier guards another type of German factory, this one underground (4), captured near Berlin.

Photos, Associated Press, Pictorial Press

In Rapid Succession the Nazi 'Plums' Fall



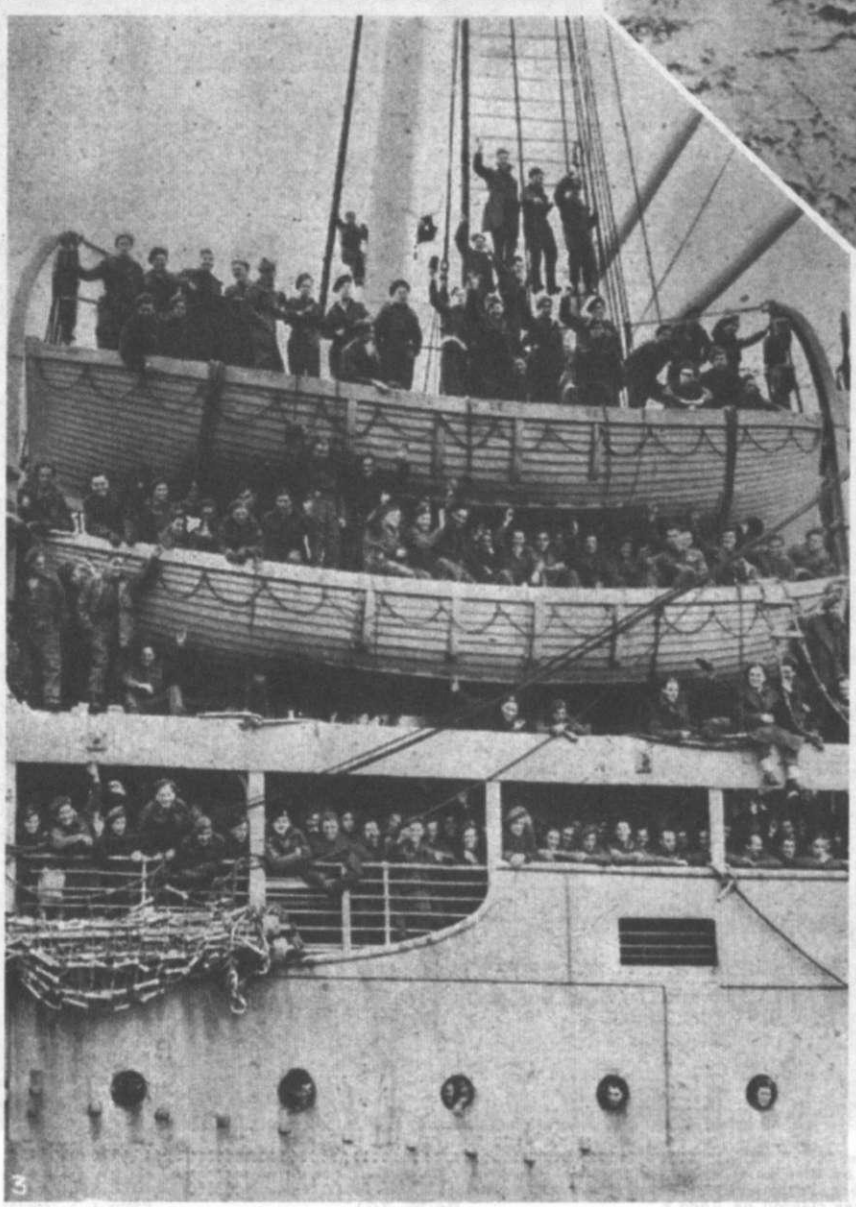
AT FRANKFORT-ON-MAIN, BIRTHPLACE OF GOETHE, Germany's greatest poet, youthful civilians crowded the streets (1) as men of General Patton's U.S. 3rd Army moved in on March 28, 1945. When General Patch's U.S. 7th Army took over in Mannheim the following day, refugees crept from a huge air-raid shelter, raising the white flag (2). At Heidelberg (3), ancient university town taken almost undamaged on March 30, captured Nazi snipers were marched away—out of the war.

Photos, Associated Press, Keystone

A New Use for Germany's Famous Motor-Roads

ON THE BROAD FRANKFORT AUTOBAHN, hordes of Nazi prisoners marched westwards to captivity after the swift seizure of Giessen, important rail-and-road junction in the Lahn valley, by General Hodges' U.S. 1st Army on March 28, 1945. As the captives moved thickly along the grass-covered dividing line of this Frankfort motor-road, tanks and transport of the 6th Armoured Division of General Patton's U.S. 3rd Army rolled in a one-way stream towards Cassel, which they cleared on April 4. *Photo, U.S. Official*

Red Army Advance Freed British Prisoners



RESCUED FROM NAZI P.O.W. CAMPS overrun by the Russians in their rapid sweep westwards, and magnificently cared for by the Soviet Government, over 1,000 Allied Servicemen arrived at a northern British port on March 30, 1945 ; travelling by way of the Middle East, a smiling group in fur caps (1) chatted with a Soviet officer before embarking at Odessa. These (2), liberated at Poznan, trudged through the snows to a repatriation centre. Ex-captives cheered themselves hoarse as their ship docked at last (3), ; four of them sported a Nazi flag and armlet as trophies (4). The repatriates included officers and men of the British Army, the Royal Navy, the R.A.F., R.C.A.F., the Canadian Army and the Royal Norwegian Army.

Photos, Pictorial Press, New York Times

I WAS THERE! Eye Witness Stories of the War

From Above the Rhine I Saw the Sky-Men Pounce

Field-Marshal Montgomery in March 1945, in a personal message to his troops included this memorable phrase, "21st Army Group will now cross the Rhine." Here James Wellard, The Sunday Express Correspondent, tells what he saw from an observation plane manoeuvring over that river on March 24. See also illus. pages 776, 777 and 783-786.

IT is 11 o'clock, Saturday morning, and as far as the eye can see to the east, from 1,200 feet above the Rhine, Germany is flaming and smoking. What is now going on in the skies around me, on the ground and in water, is like a futurist painting of Armageddon. For the Germans on the east bank of the Rhine it is Armageddon.

This is D-Day concentrated. Filling the sky, transport planes, two-engined American Dakotas, four-engined British Halifaxes, are streaming across the sky in two columns. I saw the first wave of this airborne armada just go in. From each plane there was a series of tiny explosive puffs which blossomed out into parachutes. Suddenly, a thousand men were swinging to the ground. German flak reacted strongly to the first wave. Despite tremendous artillery and fighter-bomber barrage some flak batteries survived. From them, dirty black puffs are blotting the sky. From others, red tracers are coming up.

I see one Dakota plunge suddenly to earth. Two more are smoking. One of them breaks into a snarling blaze. The planes get across the Rhine. The crew bale out. Still the planes come in. Now the second wave is approaching. I look through the glass roof of the observation plane, and see giant tow-planes pulling, on long nylon ropes, two gliders apiece. These are the smaller American Waco gliders, which fly either one behind the other or in line abreast.

NEXT come the big British Horsas, heaving along behind Halifaxes. They come by hundreds, suddenly break loose from the tow-planes and start circling and diving to the earth. Mercifully the German flak seems almost to have stopped now, and we speculate whether the flak gun crews have panicked under the monstrous spectacle of this air armada and abandoned their positions.

As we sail slowly along the Rhine between Xanten and Wesel and cross to the other side to take a close look at the flaming German town of Blisslich, I can see that resistance has collapsed for miles inland. My pilot is looking for enemy flak and artillery positions. We can find none, and during an hour in the air see only one enemy shell land on the west bank. It fell between two Alligators lined up along the white road waiting their turn to go down into the river.

At the river banks the scene is almost as peaceful as a Saturday afternoon on the Thames. The countryside is lush and flat on both sides of the Rhine. Our ferries are scuttling back and forth like water beetles with nothing to hamper them. I can see men standing in boats waving to us.

There are vehicles, British and American, stacked on both banks. Crews stand around leisurely. Some are lying on their backs in the beautiful sunshine, some are eating. Everything, as a field commander said, is "going like a house afire."

I see our pontoon bridges already reaching out across the river. The Alligators need not wait for them, and waddle down through the mud, plunge into the water and start swimming across. Trucks on ferries are starting across. Already hundreds of vehicles with coloured recognition panels atop them are moving eastward across the Rhine.

Every German town and village inland is buried under mushroom-like clouds of smoke. Our artillery has killed them. Rubble is so deep our traffic is going around over fields marked out with white tape. Along one road, walking west, comes a line of men in blue-grey uniforms. They are 200 German prisoners with one Tommy escorting them to the river.

We fly south to Wesel; Wesel flattened and looking from the air like the embers of a bonfire. Our vehicles are already moving in. Last night the R.A.F. gave its most perfect demonstration of night precision bombing. Wesel is small, compact. They say every bomb went plumb into the target. If there are Germans in Wesel they must still be digging their way out of the rubble.

GENERAL SIR MILES DEMPSEY, British 2nd Army commander, opened a 1,420 ft. long British-built Bailey bridge over the Rhine, across which he is seen passing in a jeep, on March 30, 1945. *Photo, British Official*

To the north, somewhere, another wave of gliders were going down. Fields for miles were dotted now with white, red and orange parachutes. Gliders with their infantrymen and supplies have to make a steep, dangerous descent into fields, and down they go, wheeling like big birds all over the sky.

I see them grinding to a halt against fences and trees, and men leaping out and running towards ditches. But the fantastic thing about it all is the absence of enemy opposition.

Slaves of the Reich on the Westward Trek

Tragic is the march of the freed peoples who had been pressed into Hitler's hated service; tragic, too, will be the homecoming for thousands of them. Pathetic is their gratitude to their liberators. Colin Wills, News Chronicle War Correspondent with the British 2nd Army, sent this dispatch on April 2, 1945, depicting scenes on the roads of Western Germany.

WE have burst the walls of the prison land, and through the gaps the slaves are streaming westwards in scores of thousands, amazed by the light of freedom. They line both sides of every road, trudging on through dust or damp, continually stepping aside out of the way of our onrushing columns. Some carry bundles, some push makeshift handcarts laden with the bundles of four or five companions of the road. But very few have any belongings at all beyond their ragged civilian suits or patchwork uniforms.

These uniforms are as diverse as the poor wretches who wear them. Some are the uniforms of Allied armies to which the wearers belonged before they were captured and drafted into German labour gangs. Others are the garb of the Todt organization and other similar slave groups. Inevitably the eye becomes accustomed; after a while the trudging columns become part of the unnoticed landscape.

And then suddenly one is aware of a face, glimpsed in passing, and the mind photographs the expression of the eye, the cruel sculpture wrought on the grey flesh by years of suffering. Suddenly one realizes what is going on. These are men and women recalled to life.

Slowly, painfully, they are making their way homewards. The home they left years

OUT OF FLAK-FILLED SKIES OVER THE DROPPING-ZONE in the Rees-Wesel area parachute troops of the British 6th Airborne Division descended in mass, as narrated in the story above, to aid the British 2nd Army's crossing of the Rhine. The plane from which this remarkable photograph was taken was shot down a few minutes later—the first aircraft victim of the gigantic operation. Parachute troops and glider-borne infantry totalled 40,000. **See also illustration page 776.**

Photo, U.S. Official

SLAVES RELEASED by the swiftly advancing U.S. 7th Army, these French and Russian soldiers, once prisoners in German hands, trekked to the rear of the Allied lines as narrated here. *Photo, Associated Press*

ago may no longer exist. Their families and friends may be dead. But they have got to go and see. They are weak, weary and ill, some of them crippled.

Only the irresistible call of home can keep them going—that and the unbelievable experience of freedom. For they are free. Free. They walk the roads, and the very dust they shuffle through is blessed to walk upon. Free. They eat their meagre meals in ditches by the road, and the dry crusts taste sweet. They all move westward, though many come from the east and bear on the sleeve or breast a letter P, for Polish, or the word "Ost," to show they come from somewhere in Germany's eastern European reservoir of helots.

Many are Russians, and these raise a proud smile as they point to themselves and shout to you, "We Russki," and if you stop and tell them the latest news of the Red Army the smile becomes a broad grin and they pace with longer strides and squarer shoulders.

They all move westward—easterners along with French, Belgians and Dutch, Czechs and Yugo-Slavs, along with Danes and Norwegians, because westward they will find Allied organizations ready to deal with them and send them home when possible.

Already these organizations are penetrating well into the battle zones, but cannot keep pace with the Allied spearhead. So the freed slaves march west to meet them. In the last few days war prisoners have begun to swell the ranks of the marching men. Several Stalags have been overrun, and many prisoners cannot wait for official transport. They must start homewards instantly.

I have met scores of French and Belgian soldiers walking west, shaken their hands, given them cigarettes, talked with them. It is wonderful to see the joy in their faces, hear their voices rise with excitement.

Some of them somehow have managed to make themselves little cockades in their national colours, wherewith to adorn their shabby Army caps. Others have even been able to muster a little gaiety and wear bright scarves picked up somewhere along the road. One even marched solemnly in the silk top hat of some fleeing German burgher.

There is immense satisfaction in rolling into Germany with the conquering armies. But there is deeper satisfaction in realizing that even in Germany these are still armies of liberation. For, however pathetic these columns of pilgrims are, however tragic their past, however difficult their future, this is an hour of wonder for them—the hour when they can say, as they do say over and over among themselves, in all their diverse tongues: "We are free!"

I Saw Hitler's Great Arsenal Cold and Dead

The 15-square miles of the Thyssen steel works, where Germany's war weapons had been forged, have taken the final knock-out. Writing from Duisburg on March 30, 1945, Daily Mail Special Correspondent Noel Monks, with the U.S. 9th Army, records his visit to this smashed-up "arsenal of hate."

A LARGE white flag droops over the administration building of the once mighty Thyssen steelworks here, a fitting sign that Hitler's game is up.

For the Nazis' plans of world conquest were cradled in the thousand blast furnaces within sight of where I am writing this.

And a thousand German workers today came out of their holes in the ground—timid and cowering, shivering and hungry—in one of the most significant mass surrenders of the war. They had been on strike since January 22—date of the last R.A.F. raid—when at least 5,000 of their fellow-workers perished at their benches.

Nothing the Nazis could do since then could get these people to evacuate the ruins of the once throbbing works and continue elsewhere. The war for them ended on the night of January 22. Not a wheel has turned in the Thyssen works since that night.

They could not have turned even if the workers had been in the mood. For the plant's 15 square miles is a mass of rusty, twisted ruins, and in the giant blast furnaces that for 12 years have been forging Hitler's war weapons there are now only stone-cold ashes. Strangely enough, hundreds of tall chimneys still stand, gaunt and smokeless. Wandering through the ruins of the Thyssen plant today was like walking over the graves of millions of men, for it was the Thyssen brothers who dazzled Hitler with blueprints of tanks, guns and battleships and led him to make war.

I came to the main Thyssen plant past the bodies of a dozen Volkssturmers who died in a final hopeless battle. Their deaths were as useless as the gutted arsenal they defended. The main gates were blown off their hinges by grenades hurled by G.I. Joes as they passed by on to Duisburg. Inside the gates I was met by half a dozen nervous caretakers who had been in the works' fire service. Their eyes were watery and red-rimmed either by weeping or sleeplessness.

They told me that several thousand employees were living down below in the works' shelters, as their homes had all been destroyed. "We were not allowed to go to shelters during raids, as it interfered too much with production," they told me. The works had been repaired six times in the past four years but had never been in full production since the first R.A.F. raids in 1941.

DOWN in the shelters was one of those scenes that are familiar in Germany today—a whole community living deep underground in appalling conditions. There must have been 1,500 in this one shelter. All over this area about 40,000 people are today coming up out of the ground.

Within the past 24 hours nearly 500,000 more German civilians in this corner of the Ninth Army front have been added to the cares of the over-taxed Military Government officials. In the bomb-cratered courtyard of the Thyssen main works I saw only a small group of Russian slave workers, found locked down the works coal mine, obviously left to starve.

Not far from the Thyssen works are canal docks, where the plant's output used to be loaded into barges for their journey up "Happy Valley" (the Ruhr). I saw at least 100 sunk or wrecked barges on the canal banks. You could see there had been no activity here for many weeks.

Battle of Rheine Town and Its Aftermath

Two days before Montgomery's Rhine crossing, airfields around Rheine from which German jet-propelled and fighter squadrons operated had been heavily attacked by 1,300 Fortresses and Liberators. The town itself was entered by the 11th Armoured Division on April 2, 1945, and Daily Mail Special Correspondent Alexander Clifford tells of the battle.

I WATCHED it from the farm building where I was eating my lunch, half a mile away. It happened on some high ground just beyond the Dortmund Canal. The Somerset Light Infantry had got across the canal some time before. The last bridge had been blown up in their faces, but the new bridge had been swiftly built. Then they drove on up the road in the usual way.

And suddenly they found themselves faced with a battle. The Germans had cleared out an N.C.O.s training school at Hanover, formed the pupils into a battalion, and marched them on foot to the canal. They were only very lightly armed, but they occupied a wood and blocked the defiles through the high ground.

They were good soldiers. They even launched counter-attacks, which is almost unheard of these days. A real attack had to be planned. It went on from three sides. The Monmouths had gone round behind the ridge and the Herefords had attacked from in front of it. On the canal side tanks stood in the fields and spouted shells into the woods.

In about ten minutes of battle one saw what is happening to this country. Two farmlands and a wood were abolished and the German battalion broken into fragments.

Mortar shells began dropping into the wood, bursting about the treetops and

snapping off the trunks this way and that. The tanks on the right swung their turrets slightly and played the hose of their machine-gun fire into a farmhouse. The pink tracers looked like golf balls, with a slight slice because of the wind.

The house began to burn in the roof with a brilliant red flame. One knew that the farmer and his children were almost certainly in the cellar. One knew the cattle were dying in the fields—the mortality among cows in war is astonishing. Quite quickly the battle spluttered to a finish. So much explosive had crashed on to that wood that none could have continued to fight out of it.

As the battle finished, a file of German soldiers marched down the road, turned into Brigade H.Q., saluted the military policeman, and gave themselves up. The astounded policeman accepted their surrender.

One of them simply happened to be in the neighbourhood on leave from the Russian front. Another prisoner was a tough, handsome specimen, Sgt.-Major Haner, from the Italian front. He had fought at Cassino and he was back in Germany for the first time in four years.

He was interrogated, and he answered the questions with stiff correctness. His face was drawn and his eyes were hollow. Suddenly he burst into tears. "Can I ask something?" he said. "Can I write a note for my mother and my wife?"

"No, of course not," answered the British officer. The German pulled himself together and turned to go. "Why do you want to write?" asked the British officer. The German said, "I haven't been home for four years. I will show you where my home is," and he pointed on the map to a place that lay a mile away. It had been captured by the British an hour before.

It's the sort of thing that is bound to keep happening. No one has yet got used to the newness and excitement of being in Germany. For all of us there is an endless fascination in watching the reactions of the civilians and discussing psychological theories about them. You then drive away down a lonely country road and find farms with nothing but a white flag to show they have ever heard of our approach. And you stop to get eggs and you know that you are getting genuine spontaneous reaction from the farm people.

This afternoon a laughing buxom girl brought us the eggs, wished us a happy Easter, and asked, "When are tanks coming?" We refused to discuss military details and she was frankly disappointed.

VOLKSSTURM R.S.M. captured by the 53rd Welsh Division in Bocholt, cleared of the enemy by March 29, 1945, displays his armlet.
Photo, British Official

She liked soldiers and she wanted to see ours. Her little sisters waved to us as we left.

What are you to make of it? One really gets the impression that they want to be friendly. And that is astonishing when you see their towns. Take Rheine, which is the Second Army's biggest to date. It isn't flat entirely, but empty and uninhabitable.

Once again the stout old church seems to have been miraculously spared. It is uncannily quiet save for the spasmodic crack of the sniper's rifle. There is really nothing to say about Rheine. It is the typical wrecked town that is becoming sickeningly familiar.

It was bombed because it was the centre of a ring of airfields. It was shelled because it lies on the Ems and some odd German units attempted to hold the crossings. It was entered, and it went through the harsh purging-that is known as being "cleaned." That is to say, it was made safe to our troops. So you thread its silent streets with glass and woodwork crackling under your wheels and empty windows staring blindly at you from either side.

You find that everything has obviously been left at a moment's notice—half-cooked food on cold stoves, cash still in the cash registers, wine on the café tables. All of it half-wrecked, of course, but all recognizably there. You find a clothing shop burst wide open and you wonder at the astonishing display of garments.

I suppose that none of it was much good, but I saw enough artificial silk stockings lying in the roadway to turn any comparable English town green with envy. Just now and again you become conscious of the mass of personal tragedy that lies around. A half-finished letter on a desk, or an umbrella left to dry before a now cold stove, makes you realize that here some thousands of people have suddenly deserted their homes. If you don't believe the Germans are being punished, you should walk through Rheine's streets.

OUR DIARY OF THE WAR

MARCH 27, Tuesday *2,033rd day*

Western Front.—U.S. 1st Army reached Limburg and joined with units of 3rd Army south of Coblenz.

Air.—R.A.F. dropped 10-ton bombs on U-boat pens at Farge, near Bremen.

Russian Front.—Soviet troops broke into Danzig and Gdynia.

Philippines.—Announced that U.S. forces landed on Cebu Island.

Far East.—Units of British Pacific Fleet joined with U.S. Fleet in attacks on Ryukyu Islands.

MARCH 28, Wednesday *2,034th day*

Western Front.—9th Army took Hamborn. 3rd Army entered Wiesbaden. Frankfort-on-Main cleared.

Air.—Flying Fortresses bombed tank plants at Berlin and Hanover.

Russian Front.—Gdynia captured by Rokossovsky's troops. Malinovsky captured Gyor and Komarno.

MARCH 29, Thursday *2,035th day*

Western Front.—British and Canadians cleared Emmerich and crossed German-Dutch frontier. Montgomery's armour broke out from Rhine bridge-head. Mannheim fell to U.S. 7th Army.

MARCH 30, Friday *2,036th day*

Western Front.—Heidelberg captured by U.S. 7th Army. 3rd Army reached Lauterbach.

Air.—U.S. bombers made heaviest assault on Hamburg, Bremen and Wilhelmshaven.

Russian Front.—Town and fortress of Danzig stormed by Rokossovsky. Tolbukhin crossed Austrian frontier from Hungary.

Burma.—Kyaukse occupied by 14th Army troops.

MARCH 31, Saturday *2,037th day*

Western Front.—French 1st Army crossed the Rhine between Mannheim and Karlsruhe.

Air.—Halle, Brandenburg and Brunswick attacked by U.S. bombers. R.A.F. bombed U-boat yards at Hamburg.

Russian Front.—Soviet troops captured Ratibor on Upper Oder.

Far East.—Super-Fortresses bombed airfields in Kyushu and aircraft factories at Nagoya.

APRIL 1, Sunday *2,038th day*

Western Front.—Link-up of 1st and 9th Armies near Lippstadt sealed off the Ruhr. Paderborn captured.

Russian Front.—Soviet troops captured Sopron, at approaches to Vienna. Koniev captured encircled town of Glogau on the Oder.

Far East.—Okinawa, largest of the Ryukyu Islands, invaded by Allies.

APRIL 2, Monday *2,039th day*

Western Front.—British and Canadians occupied Enschede and Rheine. Münster entered by British and U.S. forces.

Russian Front.—Nagy Kanisza, oil centre in Hungary, captured by Soviet troops.

Italy.—8th Army forces landed on spit of land dividing Lake Comacchio from Adriatic, N. of Ravenna.

APRIL 3, Tuesday *2,040th day*

Western Front.—Canadian 1st Army captured Nordhorn and crossed Twenthe canal between Zutphen and Hengelo.

Air.—German troop concentrations at Nordhausen, N.E. of Cassel, bombed by Lancasters. U-boat yards at Kiel attacked by Flying Fortresses.

Russian Front.—Tolbukhin's troops captured Wiener Neustadt.

Japan.—Super-Fortresses attacked aircraft works on Honshiu Island.

Far East.—Liberators from Luzon bombed Hong Kong harbour.

Philippines.—U.S. troops landed in Sulu Archipelago near British North Borneo.

APRIL 4, Wednesday *2,041st day*

Western Front.—Cassel and Gotha cleared by 3rd Army. French entered Karlsruhe. Aschaffenburg cleared by 7th Army.

Air.—U.S. heavy bombers again attacked U-boat yards at Kiel and Hamburg.

Russian Front.—Bratislava, capital of Slovakia, stormed by Malinovsky. Baden and Zwoelfaxing captured, S. and S.E. of Vienna.

APRIL 5, Thursday *2,042nd day*

Western Front.—Allied tanks and infantry crossed the Weser. Osnabruck cleared by 1st Commando Brigade, Minden by 6th Airborne Division.

Air.—U.S. bombers attacked ordnance depots and railway yards in southern Germany.

General.—Soviet Govt. denounced Russo-Japanese neutrality pact.

APRIL 6, Friday *2,043rd day*

Western Front.—Eisenach and Hamm cleared of the enemy. In Holland, Canadians captured Coevorden and reached the Ijssel river.

Air.—Railways at Leipzig and Halle attacked by U.S. bombers.

Russian Front.—Soviet troops broke into defences of Vienna.

Balkans.—Serajevo captured by Yugoslav troops.

Pacific—Japanese air force attacking Allied ships off Okinawa had heavy losses; 3 U.S. destroyers sunk.

APRIL 7, Saturday *2,044th day*

Western Front.—At night Allied parachutists landed in N. Holland east of the Zuider Zee.

Air.—U.S. bombers attacked airfields and railways from Hamburg to Nuremberg; 63 enemy fighters shot down. Mosquitoes bombed Berlin from Continental bases for first time.

Japan.—Tokyo and Nagoya bombed by 300 Super-Fortresses.

Pacific.—Allied carrier-aircraft attacked Jap fleet in East China Sea, sinking battleship Yamato, two cruisers and three destroyers.

APRIL 8, Sunday *2,045th day*

Western Front.—Canadians captured Zutphen. U.S. troops entered Gelsenkirchen and Göttingen. French 1st Army captured Pforzheim.

Russian Front.—Soviet troops forced Morava and Danube N.W. of Bratislava.

Baltic.—Danish patriots escaped with 21 ships to Sweden.

APRIL 9, Monday *2,046th day*

Western Front.—Krupps works at Essen surrendered to Allies. Canadians in Holland linked up with airborne troops.

Air.—U.S. bombers attacked jet-aircraft bases near Munich. R.A.F. bombed U-boat yards at Hamburg by day and at Kiel by night, sinking pocket-battleship Admiral Scheer.

Russian Front.—Koenigsberg captured by Vassilievsky's troops. Tolbukhin broke into centre of Vienna.

Italy.—8th Army crossed Senio river after heavy air bombardment.

APRIL 10, Tuesday *2,047th day*

Western Front.—U.S. 9th Army captured Hanover and cut road to Brunswick. Occupation of Essen completed.

Air.—Jet-aircraft bases in Berlin area attacked by U.S. bombers; 305 enemy aircraft destroyed. R.A.F. bombed railway yards at Leipzig.

Flash-backs

1940

April 9. *Denmark and Norway invaded by German Armies.*

April 10. *First battle of Narvik; destroyer Hardy sunk.*

1941

March 28. *Battle of Cape Matapan; Italian fleet routed.*

April 6. *Yugoslavia and Greece invaded by Germans.*

1942

March 27-28. *Combined Operations raid on port of St. Nazaire.*

April 9. *American resistance ended on Bataan, Philippines.*

1943

March 28. *Mareth, Toujane and Matmata captured by 8th Army.*

April 10. *8th Army occupied Tunisian port of Sfax.*

1944

March 31. *Red Army crossed frontier into Rumania.*

April 10. *Black Sea port of Odessa recaptured by Russians.*

STREAMING TO CAPTIVITY IN THEIR THOUSANDS, relics of the Wehrmacht in the eastern Rhineland passed in procession (1) to the cages, following the U.S. 3rd Army's spectacular surge across the river, launched on March 22, 1945. In a message to his troops on March 30, Lieut.-Gen. Patton declared that in less than two months they had captured 140,112 enemy soldiers and killed or wounded 90,000, " thereby eliminating practically all the German 7th and 1st Armies." These Nazis (2) abandoned their arms before surrendering to a soldier of the British 2nd Army. Among the 8,000 Germans taken by Patton's troops in the Saar triangle were these (3). At Wesel, on March 24, the 1st British Commando Brigade captured the German commander, Lieut.-Col. Ross (4).

Photos, British Official, P.N.A., Associated Press

THE WAR IN THE AIR

by Capt. Norman Macmillan, M.C., A.F.C.

FOR seven days before the 21st Army Group crossing of the Lower Rhine, massed formations of aircraft of the 2nd T.A.F., the U.S.A. 9th A.F., Bomber Command and the U.S.A. 8th A.F. rained bombs, rockets, cannon-shells and bullets upon tactical targets east of the river barrier, attacking guns, troop concentrations, and bridges as far forward as the river Weser (at Bremen, on March 23, with 10-ton bombs). The earlier cloud-covered skies had changed to blue.

The co-ordination of all British and American air forces engaged in the operation (whether based on the Western Continent or the U.K.) was controlled by Air Marshal Sir Arthur Coningham, commander of 2nd T.A.F. Through their combined effort all rail communication to the chosen combat area was smashed on the enemy side, and the battlefield isolated. British heavy bombers attacked the strategic rail centres of Münster, Hanover and Osnabruck; subsequently, on April 3, Lancasters attacked enemy troop concentrations 60 miles north-east of Cassel.

BETWEEN 9 p.m. on March 23 and 3 a.m. on March 24, 21st Army Group forces crossed the Rhine in Buffaloes and naval mechanized and vehicle personnel landing craft. After daylight on the 24th the greatest airborne force ever seen was placed into position ahead of the surface forces in areas east of Rees and Wesel. More than 40,000 troops invaded Germany from the air that day. The glider train was 500 miles long, and between 5,000 and 6,000 aircraft of all types flew in this one operation: tugs, gliders, bombers, fighters. Curtiss C.46 Commandos able to carry 36 paratroopers were used for the first time. One airborne formation carried an anti-tank unit. In one convoy some British gliders carried two jeeps, 6-pdr. guns, other artillery, automatic weapons, blood plasma. Liberators following the gliders dropped from a few hundred feet supplies weighing 600 tons, including 4,400 canisters and bottles containing food, fighting equipment and medical supplies.

LUNCH-TIME Attack on Berlin by Soviet Heavy Bombers

Fifty per cent of the Glider Pilot Regiment pilots who landed the troops east of the Rhine were volunteers from the R.A.F. They went into battle after landing. No. 38 Group, 1st Allied Airborne Army, commanded by Air Vice-Marshal J. R. Scarlett-Streatfeild, was responsible for the British airborne operation. (See illus p. 776.)

From Italy heavy bombers of the U.S. A. 15th A.F. flew to bomb Berlin for the first time on March 24. Lightning fighters escorted them at the Italian end of their double journey; Mustangs met them over the target area and protected them there. Two days later Berlin was attacked at lunch-time by Soviet bombers.

By March 25 the parachute and glider-borne forces and the ground forces east of the Rhine had linked up. Forces from the three main bridge-heads across the Rhine at the Wesel, Remagen and Mainz crossings advanced deeper into Germany, and resistance began to crumble. By March 28 the forward moves were so rapid that pilots of the tactical air forces reported the enemy fleeing eastward, and the Allied bomb-line (demarcation behind which bombs must not be dropped because of the risk of hitting Allied forces) had to be advanced at short intervals throughout the day. Some attack sorties had to be recalled for rebriefing before they could drop their bombs.

As the armies pushed on to capture town after town—Speyer on March 23, Darmstadt on March 25, Frankfort-on-Main on March 26, Cassel on April 3, Osnabruck and Hengelo on April 4 and Almelo on April 5—and swung wide to bypass the Ruhr, the bombers maintained their strategic war; on Good Friday, March 30, the U.S.A. 8th A.F. sent its biggest force of 1,400 bombers escorted by 900 fighters to bomb the U-boat yards and other targets at Bremen, Hamburg and Wilhelmshaven. The cruiser Köln and other ships were sunk.

The day was indeed a good Friday for England. V-weapon bombardment ceased, and up to the time of writing has not been resumed. This is partly due to the bombers' cutting of the railways, but more to the Germans pulling out of Holland through the gap between Arnhem and the Zuider Zee under the increasing pressure of the Canadian 1st Army and the tactical aircraft working with it. (This confirms the forecast in my first special article [see page 707] written after visiting the Western Front.) That day 2nd T.A.F. was ordered to hold fire because of the swift advance of the bomb-line ahead of Montgomery's now fast-moving "break-out" forces: British tanks entered Münster. But this gave the aircraft the more opportunity to bomb the German columns evacuating Western Holland in the biggest smash attack since Falaise; from the evening of March 31 the escape roads were jammed with German traffic.

ALLIED aircraft moved forward across the Rhine to operate from captured German airfields, and so maintain with greater ease their close air support for the surface forces. Strategic tonnage in March broke all records. Bomber Command dropped 67,500 tons and the U.S.A. 8th A.F. 65,625 (British) tons—all on Germany; the U.S. bombers flew 28,500 sorties, carrying an average bomb load of 46 cwt. On April 3, 750 Fortresses, with 650 Mustangs in escort, bombed ship-building yards at Kiel, and a smaller force of Liberators bombed Hamburg.

IN the Far East, after a preliminary bombardment by British and American carrier-borne aircraft, U.S. forces landed on Okinawa in the Ryukyu Islands, 370 miles south-west of Japan, on April 1. This American invasion was a continuation of Pacific strategy in which the larger islands—in this case Formosa and Kyushu—are bypassed and a smaller island seized to serve as a fixed aircraft carrier. British support to the American landing was given in opening attacks on March 26 and 27 against the Sakishima Islands by Avenger bombers, rocket-firing Fireflies, and Hellcat and Corsair fighters. The carriers were led by the Illustrious. The objectives were aerodromes, radio and harbour installations, administrative buildings and vessels.

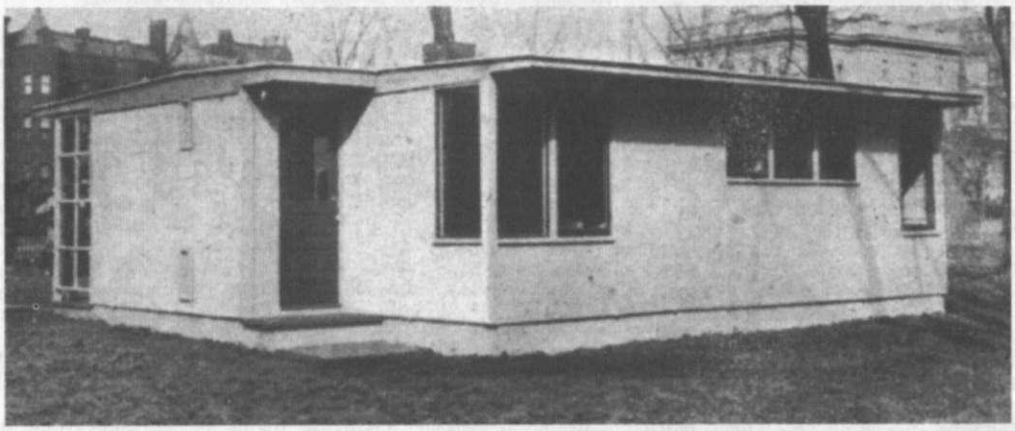
Okinawa island is 50 miles long and averages over 10 miles across. Little opposition was met at first and two airfields were quickly captured. But on April 6, Japanese resistance stiffened, and a great air/sea action followed a Japanese bomber attack on the U.S. fleet; 417 Jap aircraft were shot down, 39 by the British.

JAPANESE sources state that in the Far East are the British aircraft carriers Illustrious, Victorious, Formidable, Implacable, Indefatigable, Furious and Eager; this force should be able to place about 400/450 aircraft into the air, but it is likely that some of these carriers are in the Indian Ocean.

A small force of Super-Fortress bombers attacked Nagoya on March 30. On April 6, Super Fortresses bombing Tokyo and Nagoya (about 300 in the force) were escorted for the first time by fighters of the U.S.A. 7th A.F. On that day Liberators based in the Philippines bombed Hong Kong targets for the third consecutive day. On March 30 F/Lt. H. C. Graham flew a Canadian-built Mosquito 2,184 miles from Newfoundland to Scotland in 5 hrs. 38 mins. at a speed of 6½ miles a minute. On March 31, 1945 the Joint Commonwealth Air Training Plan for training air-crews ended.

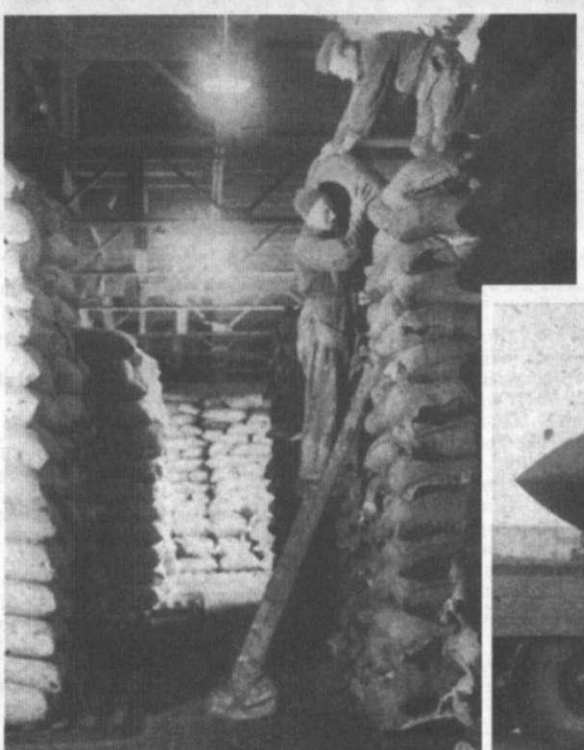
PREPARING FOR THE WESEL LANDINGS, March 24, 1945, British parachute troops became proficient in rope-climbing as part of the instructional course laid down at a training school in England. Before his first descent a learner goes through a programme in which over 20 mediums of jumping and landing are used. **See also story in page 92, Vol. 7.**

From Home to Rome With Our Roving Camera



PREFABRICATED HOUSE (left), one of 30,000 being prepared for shipment from the U.S.A. to ease the plight of bombed-out Londoners, was on exhibition at Washington, D.C. On March 6, 1945, Mr. Duncan Sandys, Minister of Works, declared that London house repairs were nearing the 719,000 target.

ACTING AS POLICEMEN with the Inter-Allied Control Commission in Germany after the cessation of hostilities, British Public Safety Officers will wear a uniform (below) of dark blue with silver buttons, resembling Civil Defence battledress.



IN A ROME NAAFI (above) a British sergeant records a message for home. Thousands of families in Britain are to hear the voices of their men recorded on gramophone records in Italy and the Middle East.

TEN-TON BOMB of the R.A.F. (below) rides to the filling-centre on a specially designed lorry with 90 h.p. Diesel engine. These gigantic missiles softened up the Reich for the big advance. They are flown to their targets in Lancaster bombers, which themselves weigh just over ten tons. See also illus. in page 764.

FOOD FOR LIBERATED HOLLAND stored in an Allied warehouse, including sacks of sugar and flour, ready for distribution. Desperate plight of the inhabitants of the occupied region of the Netherlands is described in page 780.

 Photos, British Official, Keystone, Planet News

Editor's Postscript

RECENTLY, within the space of a few days, B.B.C. listeners lost three of their favourite entertainers, among them my brother-Savage—the inimitable Jetsam of the "low notes." Which leads me to the obvious reflection that of all forms of contemporary fame none is so immediate and yet so transient as that of the ether. Who, for instance, remembers the early Savoy Hill artists—John Henry, Uncle Caractacus, the Pianist with the Soft Voice, A. J. Alan and the rest—all of whom had their little half-hours? The news that plans are already under way to re-establish Britain's pre-war lead in television sets me wondering whether this new art-form will also produce perishable stars and satellites. If I were asked my opinion I should say "Yes." The fault, dear Brutus, lies not in our stars but in ourselves—we who nowadays have only to turn a knob or put on a gramophone record or slip round the corner to the cinema to experience the musical and theatrical talents of the world. We flit from one to another, sipping genius as a bee or a butterfly, yawning in our embarrassment of riches. How different from the days of our youth when many of us (myself included) queued-up for the "early doors" for hours at a time! Things come too easily nowadays, and television can only make us more blasé than ever—unless Whitehall rations it. Which mightn't be so daft a decision after all.

WHETHER you personally enjoyed them or not, the "crazy" shows invented by the late George Black for the London Palladium had at least the merit of being "in period." In retrospect they seem to have been an apposite comment on the general craziness of a most regrettable decade. The antics of the so-called Crazy Gang, especially their trick of jumping out of the picture-frame, so to speak, and mocking at the picture with an air of saying, "It's all nonsense anyway," together with their wilful puncturing of all the classical unities and accepted standards, could have been extended with profit to a larger stage. Just as in the country of the blind the one-eyed man is king, so in a world where accepted standards had fallen low, amid the cynicism of political manoeuvre and complacency that conspired to close both eyes to unpleasing reality, a Crazy Gang to tear all pretences to ribbons in a riot of ribaldry might have turned out to be a Sane Gang after all. I am reminded, somewhat sadly, of the words of Greville, Lord Brooke, the Elizabethan poet: "Man is the only creature with the power of laughter; is he not also the only one that deserves to be laughed at?"

A SLIM, six-shilling story of the sea—Northern Escort, by Lieut.-Comm. J. E. Taylor, which Allen and Unwin have published—reminds me of one of the many-and-odd differences between this war and the last: the vast improvement in the literary quality of the books it has produced. The sailor, whether he be William McFee, David Bone or Marryat, invariably writes well about his job; but Lieut.-Comm. Taylor does it exceedingly well, infusing his nautical technicalities (and how seamen love them!) with what I can only describe as a sort of Whitmanesque gusto. I commend the Lieut.-Commander to the notice of the British film industry, should they ever be shamed into producing a really big naval film (pace Mr. Noel Coward) which won't bring the blush of embarrassment to hardened seamen's cheeks. Perhaps John Grierson, when he returns from Canada, might make a documentary of Northern Escort which, as it stands, is the semi-fictionalized account of four terrible days during an actual convoy trip to Murmansk, as seen from a British destroyer in the days when air-cover was simply non-existent. I shall value this fine little book most of all for its lively and moving portrait-gallery of the strangely diverse types that go to make up the Wavy Navy—not least the resourceful Surgeon-Commander in that grisly scene where he "de-hypnotizes" shell-shocked casualties and gets them staggering back to their action-stations. It is a scene worthy of Victor Hugo, and executed in less than a twentieth of the space Hugo would have taken.

Maj.-Gen. T. G. RENNIE, C.B., D.S.O., M.B.E., commander of the 51st (Highland) Division since before D-Day, survivor of St. Valery in 1940, and hero of El Alamein, was killed in action during the Rhine crossings, on March 24, 1945. *Photo, British Official*

FROM his charming little estate in Herefordshire, my old friend Rafael Sabatini, the novelist, in a recent letter, tells me of an unusual press-cutting he has just received. From the Birkenhead News, it announced that a British soldier in France recently fished up from the bed of a river a book belonging to the Birkenhead Public Library, and which turned out to be a copy of Sabatini's novel The Minion. "I don't know," comments my novelist friend, "whether the implication is the wide diffusion of my stories or that the proper place for them is at the bottom of the river!" Sabatini is himself a keen salmon-fisher and rents about a mile of the Severn, on the banks of which stands his home, Clock Mill. Somehow I feel that his sympathies were all with his fellow-angler who hooked a story and missed a fish, though, books being at a premium and a Sabatini yarn always making good reading, perhaps the soldier felt he hadn't done so badly. Had it been the Sabatini which got away, no one would have believed him—not even a fellow-angler!

THE birthplace of Beethoven at Bonn had the narrowest possible escape during the Allied bombardment which led to the town's capture on March 8, 1945, the next house in the row being completely destroyed by one of our shells. Another split second, and what hypocritical howls would have gone up from the people who befouled, devastated, and finally set fire to the house of Leo Tolstoy at Yasnaya Polyana, crying: "We will burn everything connected with the name of Tolstoy!" The particular pride of the Tolstoy shrine was that it had been sedulously kept just as it looked in the writer's lifetime. The indefatigable Russians have restored it to that condition as nearly as possible. But it can never be the same again: the spell is broken. It is all too reminiscent of the American showman who used to exhibit the axe with which George Washington cut down his father's cherry tree. Since Washington's day the axe had had two new blades and three new handles, but it was still the same axe! In Concord, Massachusetts, you are shown Emerson's study, and this too is claimed to be exactly as it was on the day he died, open books, MSS, and old pipes on the desk, the faded block calendar for 1882 torn off to the actual date, April 27. Most impressive—until you realize you are not in Emerson's house at all, but in the Concord museum! The entire contents of the room were transferred bodily from Emerson's house in the same road.

OUTSIDE St. Paul's Cathedral the other day a friend of mine was stopped by three young Scots-Canadians in uniform, obviously "rubbernecking" among the City ruins. "Pardon me," inquired one, jerking a thumb towards Wren's masterpiece, "but is this the Museum?" Taken aback, my friend quizzed them. Didn't they know the building? Hadn't they seen pictures of it? But they all shook their heads. So he told them, and waited for "Why—of course!". But they just went on shaking their heads: and then, thanking him, moved away. It seems incredible—but there it is.

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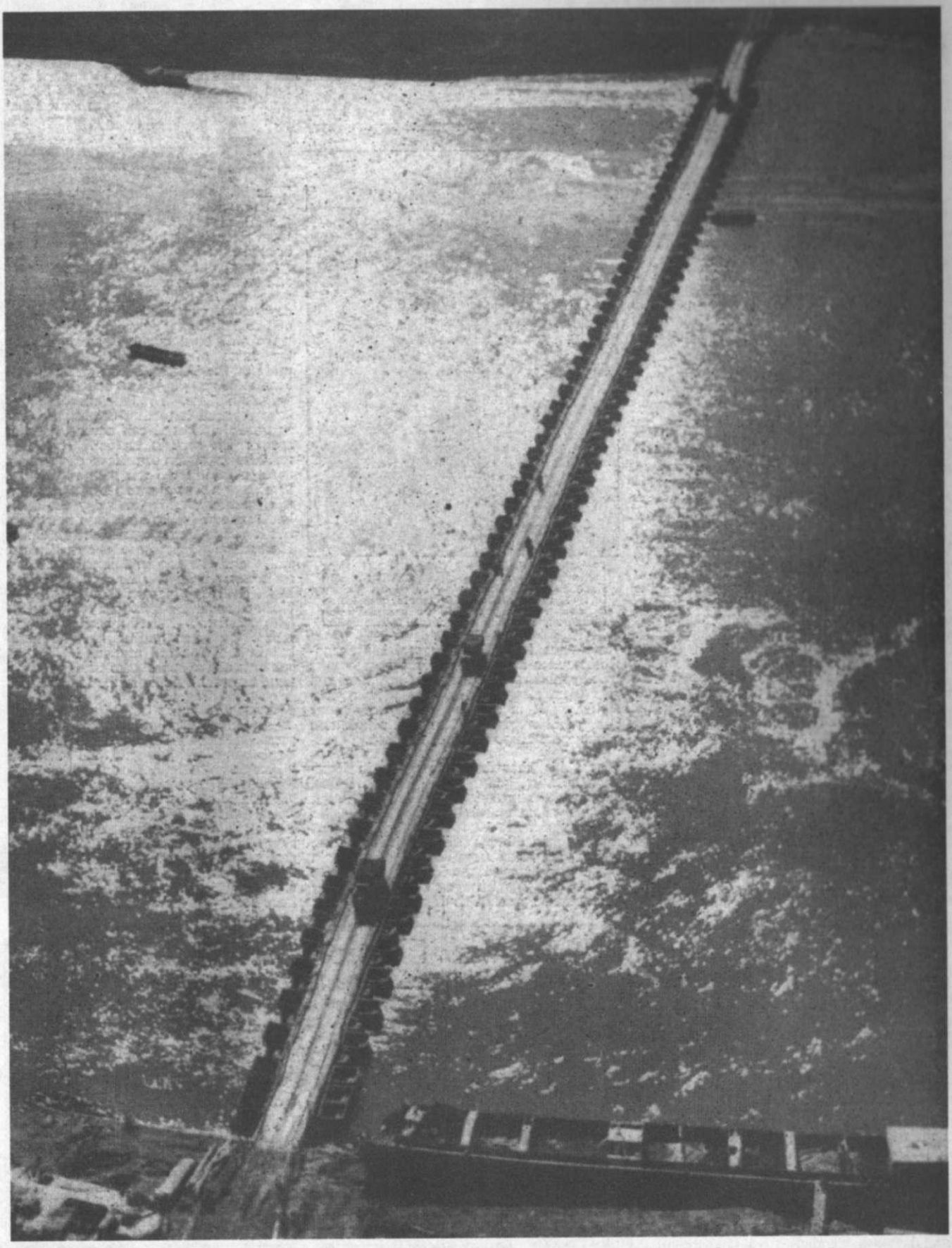
Reich's Greatest River a Bulwark No Longer



EASTWARD OVER THE RHINE, ACROSS A 400-YARDS PONTOON BRIDGE, after the enemy had destroyed all the permanent bridges—except at Remagen—equipment for General Hodges' U.S. 1st Army streamed into the Reich. When not flooded the Rhine is from 900 to 1,600 ft. wide, the current 3½ to 5½ knots, and the depth normally 20 ft., when flooded 40 ft. It was announced on March 26, 1945, that Royal Marines were guarding the pontoons against Nazi saboteur-swimmers carrying explosives.

Photo, U.S. Official

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